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Family, Household and Income Unit Variables

ABS Family, Household and Income Unit Variables provide an accurate statistical picture of the structures of families in society

Reference period 2014

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Summary

The Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) Family, Household and Income Unit Variables are used in ABS surveys and the Census of Population and Housing to produce an accurate statistical picture of the structures of Australian families. These variables provide definitions of concepts, methods of data collection, derivation procedures and output formats for use in all relevant ABS and external statistical collections. The variables are underpinned by a consistent definition of the family, which is sufficiently comprehensive to inform debate and sufficiently robust to be useful in a variety of statistical research applications.

The ABS Family, Household and Income Unit Variables underwent a minor review in 2012–13. No major changes were made to the standards as a result of this process.

Registered Marital Status Standard update, August 2019

The Registered Marital Status Standard contained in this publication was reviewed and updated in August 2019. The updated version reflects recent amendments to the Marriage Act 1961. Relevant glossary entries were also updated to reflect changes. If required, the 2014 Registered Marital Status Standard and glossary entries are available on request (please email the ABS on family.community@abs.gov.au (mailto:family.community@abs.gov.au)).

Relationship in Household and Social Marital Status Standards update, September 2022

The Relationship in Household and Social Marital Status Standards were reviewed and updated in September 2022. These updated versions reflect amendments to the Marriage Act 1961 and align them with changes made to the Registered Marital Status Standard in August 2019. A review of the full set of Family, Household and Income Standards is being undertaken.

Overview of family, household and income unit standards Background

The Overview of Family, Household and Income Unit Standards explains the precise concept of the family that is used in the ABS as the basis for standards for statistics on the household and family, and defines the concepts that are used in the different standards. It contains a brief description of the standards themselves, and explains how operational procedures and standard question modules enable the collection of data which conform to the standards. It also contains a summary of the changes made between these standards and 'Standards for statistics on the family' released in 1995, and a glossary of terms containing definitions applicable to all the standards.

The ABS began publishing standards on aspects of the family and the household in Australia in 1993 and many were consolidated in Standards for Statistics on Family Variables, 1995 (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/2EDDB54A2DE19351CA25722E0017B526?opendocument) (cat. no. 1286.0). These standards were reviewed in 2005 and a revised suite was published under the same catalogue number. A minor review of the standards was undertaken in 2013.

The broad purpose of using these standards in ABS collections is to produce an accurate statistical picture of the structures of Australian families. They provide definitions of concepts, methods of data collection, derivation procedures and output formats for use in all relevant ABS and external statistical collections. Debates related to social policy and social support can then draw on consistent evidence about families taken from a range of sources. The standards are underpinned by a consistent definition

of the family, which is sufficiently comprehensive to inform debate and sufficiently robust to be useful in a variety of statistical applications.

Key issues that can be examined by applying these standards include the diversity of families and the changing structure of households; relationship breakdown and family formation and dissolution; the extent of caring that takes place in families; the amount of unpaid household work; the combination of paid work and family responsibilities; the way in which men and women share family responsibilities; support from absent or extended family members; the needs of disadvantaged families; and the importance of secure and affordable housing for families.

Terminology used in these standards is defined in the Glossary.

Introduction

Introduction

The standards that form the basic suite of ABS variables on the family and the household are:

- Relationship in household.
- Family composition.
- Household composition.
- Relationship between families.
- · Social marital status.
- · Registered marital status.
- · Income unit composition.

Summary of major differences between this and Standards for Statistics on Family Variables, 1995 (Cat. No. 1286.0)

Relationship in household

The standard recognised the two separate input classifications for 'Relationship in household', which are applied depending on the collection methodology used, in 2005. The standard emphasises the prime purpose of this variable as an input to family formation rather than as an output variable in its own right.

Family composition

The name of the variable was changed from 'Family type' to 'Family composition' in 2005. The classification was revised to reflect a more logical sequence of decision-making in family formation, however the resultant output remained fully compatible with 'Family type'. Appendix A of the 'Family composition' standard provides a full correspondence table between the two classifications.

Household composition

The name of the variable was changed from 'Household type' to 'Household composition'. The structure of the 'Household composition' classification was changed to allow integration with 'Family composition' as this better suits ABS output requirements. In particular users of data on families and households could now bring data together consistently, as the presence or absence of individuals unrelated to families in a household was no longer a core criterion at the base level of the classification.

Social marital status and Registered marital status

These standards underwent minor changes in 2005 to clarify the application of question modules and to maintain consistency with other standards in this suite.

Income unit composition

This standard was introduced in 2005 for use when a statistical unit is required analyse the levels and distribution of income. Income units are two or more people who pool their income and savings, or an individual with sole control over their income, consumption and savings. They are formed in similar fashion to families within households using 'Relationship in household' data. They have many characteristics in common with families.

Underlying concepts

Concept of family

The concept of the family is central to ABS Family standards. In devising its definition of the family, the ABS has recognised that notions of what constitutes a family vary considerably. Some people consider their family to be the relatives with whom they live while others extend the definition of family to include relatives who live in other dwellings. For some, the notion of family includes people who are unrelated.

In the statistical context, it is necessary to have a clear and comprehensive definition of a family that considers potential analytical uses of the statistics as well as the practicalities of data collection. This inherently requires narrowing the definition of the family unit and restricting who is considered a family member.

There are two main contexts in which the term 'family' is likely to be used as a data concept. The first is providing data about the extent to which people may provide support and assistance to their relatives. In this context, the definition of family needs to be restricted only by a specification of the types of relationships which apply. In the second context, which this suite of standards mainly concerns, the label 'family' is given to the key statistical unit used in the analysis of data about the characteristics and circumstances of families. For this purpose a family is constrained to people who live together in a single household. Without this constraint it would not be possible in any practical way to place a boundary around the statistical unit 'family'.

Often the concepts of family and household refer to the same set of people when applied to a particular dwelling. This is because the family is a subset of the household by definition and, in Australian society, a household frequently comprises a single family. The family and the household are however two distinct concepts and do not comprise identical populations. People who live alone, live in group households, or share a household with a family to which they are unrelated are, according to the ABS' statistical definitions, members of households but not members of families. Furthermore, a household may be comprised of two (or more) families.

The ABS defines household as:

• 'One or more persons, at least one of whom is at least 15 years of age, usually resident in the same private dwelling'.

This definition is similar to the System of National Accounts (SNA) definition which is:

• 'A small group of persons who share the same living accommodation, who pool some, or all, of their income and wealth and who consume certain types of goods and services collectively, mainly housing and food.'

The ABS definition varies from that of the SNA only in specifically allowing lone person households, and in removing any reference to consumption.

For statistical purposes family is defined as:

• 'Two or more persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, and who are usually resident in the same household. The basis of a family is formed by identifying the presence of a couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship or other blood relationship. Some households will, therefore, contain more than one family.'

Although the majority of households in Australia are one family households, as the basis of a family is formed by identifying the presence of a couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship or other relationship, some households will contain more than one family. This definition of family has therefore been written to include households which contain more than one family. For more information on how this definition is used to form families see the 'Relationship in household' and 'Family composition' standards.

This definition of family also forms the basis for defining Income units. Income units are formed either by families or by individuals not in couple or parent/dependent child relationships within a household. Income units differ from families in that related, non-dependent individuals will form separate income units rather than being attached to the family nucleus. For more information see the 'Income unit composition' standard.

Because ABS surveys only collect data from dwellings where at least one person aged 15 years or older can be identified, the definition of a family applies an age limit of 15 years and over to at least one member of the family. The definition also restricts the concept of a family to those usually resident in the same household because in most ABS social surveys the household is

the unit selected in the survey. A concept of family which extended beyond the household would allow some individuals to be included in more than one family. In addition to leading to double counting of particular individuals in statistical collections, failure to apply an explicit boundary to the concept would make it difficult for the ABS to measure the number and characteristics of families consistently.

Although the definition of a family is constrained to a household for statistical and classificatory reasons, the ABS does produce statistics about wider family network (e.g. in the General Social Survey, and special purpose statistical collections such as the Family Characteristics Survey). Many aspects of family life are not confined to those who live as part of one household. A major emphasis of the Family Characteristics Survey is the ways in which members of family networks, who live in different households, give and receive support. This makes it possible to examine areas of support which are applicable to both the household family and the extended family network.

The household family, as described in this document and related standards, is the standard for all ABS social surveys. Thus, for the purposes of ABS statistics, a person is not considered a member of a particular family if he or she usually lives in another household, or is an unrelated individual over 15 years of age living in the same household (e.g. friend, boarder, housekeeper). However, unrelated individuals under 15 years of age living in the same household are treated as family members.

Non-family members over 15 years of age living in a family household (such as boarders) are classified as part of a family household for the purposes of 'Household composition', but are not classified as part of the family for 'Family composition' coding. For further information see the 'Household composition' standard.

The ABS aims to provide an accurate statistical picture of Australian society to be used as the basis for informed decision making and therefore derives a 'Social marital status' classification of 'Married in a de facto marriage, same-sex couple'. However, counts for this classification are usually too low to be output separately as doing so may breach ABS confidentiality provisions. Such data is therefore output in the 'Married in a de facto marriage' category accompanied by a footnote stating that the category includes partners in same-sex de facto relationships.

Core variables describing family structure

The four main variables used to describe family structure within a household are 'Relationship in household', 'Family composition', 'Household composition', and 'Social marital status'. The standards for each of these variables provide comprehensive information on the conceptual and practical issues relating to data collection and processing. Each standard includes a description of the name of the concept, its definitions, the classification criteria, the classification and code structures, a discussion of conceptual issues, standard questionnaire modules, and output classifications for the presentation of data.

Relationship in household

'Relationship in household' is a characteristic of each individual living in a household. It is used to describe the type of familial relationship (if any) an individual has with other individuals in the household. This concept is central to the application of statistical standards to the family and the household because relationships within a household provide the key for identifying the type and number of families that are in the household.

Family composition

'Family composition' differentiates families based on the presence or absence of different relationships, including couple, parent-child, child dependency or other relationships. The 'Family composition' standard includes a hierarchical 'Family composition' classification with four levels. At the highest level of the classification the four family types are:

- Couple family without children.
- · Couple family with children.
- · One parent family.
- Other family.

A second level of the classification introduces the concept of dependent children aged under 15 to provide more detail of 'Family composition' within couple and one parent families. A further level distinguishes families with dependent students aged 15-24 years from those with other dependent children. At the most detailed level the presence of non-dependent children is identified in each category of couple and one parent families. The separate identification of opposite-sex and same-sex couples within couple families is also possible when required.

The 'Family composition' classification does not identify family members outside the family nucleus. For example a family may contain a couple and their dependent children, but also the parent of one of the couple (a 'Lone ancestor'). Identification of such people within a family is done using 'Relationship in household' data.

Household composition

'Household composition' is used to identify family households, the number of families in a household, the presence of non-family members in family households, and the type of non-family households. Non-family households comprise lone person and group households. 'Household composition' can be combined with 'Family composition' in statistical output to provide information on families within households. A standard framework for publishing this information is provided in the 'Household composition' and 'Family composition' standards.

Marital Status

There are two distinct standard variables for Marital status: 'Registered marital status' and 'Social marital status', with the latter recommended for most applications. This distinction is in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). (Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing, United Nations, 2006.)

'Registered marital status' (which categorises people as Never married, Widowed, Divorced, Separated and Married) was once used in most applications. However, the increase in number of de facto marriages has made the concept less useful for identifying couple relationships. As 'Social marital status' provides a category for de facto marriages, and classifies people according to their usual living arrangements rather than their registered marital status, this concept can identify couple relationships within a household by using one of the standard sets of questions that identify relationships.

A person's 'Social marital status' is determined by whether or not they form a couple relationship with another person and the nature of that couple relationship, regardless of their 'Registered marital status'. The classification structure has, at its highest level, the categories married and not married. Within married are separate categories for registered and de facto marriage. Within de facto marriage, at the next level of detail, there is a distinction between opposite-sex and same-sex couples. These are further divided at the next level of detail into male and female same-sex couples. Although the classification contains this detail, it is unlikely that information will be published at this level in many statistical collections.

These core variables are all designed to produce and present information about families and households on a consistent basis. They are therefore based on a common set of underlying concepts and rely on a common approach to data collection. In particular, data on 'Relationship in household', 'Family composition', 'Household composition' and 'Social marital status' are obtained from a common set of relationship questionnaire modules. These modules are presented in full in the 'Relationship in household' standard.

Definitions of common concepts

A number of concepts are common to most of the variables overviewed here. In addition to the family, which is discussed above, these concepts include:

- · Household.
- Household and family reference persons.
- Usual residence.
- Couple relationship.
- Child.
- Child dependency.
- · Nominal child and nominal parent.
- Income unit.

Household

The concept of a household underpins the collection and dissemination of statistics on families and households. In the ABS a household is operationally defined as:

• 'One or more persons, at least one of whom is at least 15 years of age, usually resident in the same private dwelling.'

Thus all private dwellings in Australia by definition contain only one household. This definition of household aligns with current ABS practice and makes no significant difference to existing time series data.

Household and family reference persons

The concepts of household and family facilitate the identification of a household reference person and family reference person(s) who are used as the basis for determining the relationships between the usual residents of the household.

The household reference person is a household member whose relationship with all other members of the household may be described in terms which identify the composition of the household and are meaningful to family formation. The relationship between each individual and the household reference person can identify relationships between other members of the household and further clarify household and family composition.

A family reference person is a household member who forms a family with other members of the household and they are used to determine the relationships between other family members. As such, the person who is identified as the family reference person needs to be the person to whom relationships with all other family members can best be described. In households which contain more than one family, a family reference person must be identified for each family. This allows each family living in the household to be treated as a separate entity.

As a family reference person must be identified for each family in a multifamily household, a separate variable must be associated with each person in the household indicating to which family that person belongs. This variable is referred to as the family number. See 'The family number' under 'Coding Procedures' in the 'Relationship in household' standard.

Although the concepts of household and family reference persons are primarily used to code and process data, they can also form output variables. This occurs when characteristics of the reference person are used as indicators of characteristics of the household. For example, the occupation or qualifications of the reference person may be used as an indicator of the socioeconomic status of the family or household. Accordingly, it is necessary to have a set of criteria for determining the reference person who is most appropriate for such purposes.

In a single family household, the household reference person and the family reference person are the same person. A standard hierarchical set of criteria is used to determine the most appropriate household member to be the household reference person. These criteria are explained in the 'Relationship in household' standard, 'Appendix A - Identifying household and family reference persons'.

In multifamily households, where family coding is less straightforward, a more detailed procedure is needed to determine the appropriate reference persons. Once the household members have been allocated to families, the responses provided on the collection form are further processed to determine a reference person for each family. The rules for determining families in multifamily households are explained in the 'Relationship in household' standard, 'Appendix A - Identifying household and family reference persons'.

Usual residence

The concept of usual residence is used to constrain the description of relationships, family type, household type and social marital status to people who usually reside with a particular household. People who are temporarily residing with a household during the survey period and are usual residents of another household are considered to be visitors.

The concept of usual residence is based on the fact that each person has a basic attachment to a particular dwelling. However, this concept embodies two forms of attachment. The first is attachment to the dwelling in which a person lives the majority of the time, known as 'Usual residence in a dwelling'. The second is attachment to the dwelling which a person considers to be their family home, known as 'Usual residence in a household or family home'.

The first concept is used for producing estimates of the usual resident population by geographic area, which the Australian Statistician is under a legislative obligation to compile. These estimates are used as the basis for allocating resources. In particular, population estimates based on the Census are used to determine the number of seats allocated to each State and Territory in the House of Representatives and also for the allocation of Financial Assistance Grants by the Australian Government to the States and Territories.

The second concept is used in the Monthly Population Survey (MPS) and most other ABS household surveys. It is used for the collection and output of data for units of analysis such as households, families and income units. In operational terms, it is the

dwelling a person perceives to be their home.

Consequently the ABS has two definitions of usual residence, as follows:

- The dwelling (address) at which a person has lived or intends to live for a total of six months or more in a calendar year.
- The dwelling (address) that the person regards as their 'home'.

A more detailed explanation of the concept of usual residence and the definitions and applications of the concept can be found in <u>Usual Residence Concepts Sources and Methods Paper, Jan 2004 (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1389.0Main+Features1Jan%202004?OpenDocument) (cat. no. 1389.0).</u>

Couple relationship

The concept of couple relationship is common to all family related variables. It exists when:

- two people are usually resident in the same household
- a social, economic and emotional bonding, usually associated with marriage, exists between the partners and
- the partners consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union.

In most statistical collections it is not practical to ask questions which will determine whether bonding usually associated with marriage exists between two people. Accordingly, two individuals are regarded as a couple if both usually live in the same household in either a de facto or registered marriage. The formalisation of these living arrangements through a ceremony is not necessary.

In practice, a couple relationship exists when the relationship between two people usually resident in the same household is reported as: husband, wife, spouse, partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover, boyfriend. Any relationship label which indicates that a couple relationship exists should be accepted, unless one of two circumstances applies. One, if the relationship is further qualified by the respondent to indicate that they do not consider that a couple relationship has been formed. For example, if the respondent indicates that a person is their boyfriend and then goes on to say "but, we aren't de factos", the individuals are treated as unrelated. Two, a relationship between two females described as girlfriend is not regarded as evidence of a couple relationship unless one is specifically indicated by the respondent. The word friend on its own is not taken to be sufficient evidence that a couple relationship exists. Thus, the definition of a couple relationship is:

• A couple relationship is defined as two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. This relationship is identified by the presence of a registered marriage or de facto marriage.

The restriction of couple relationships to usual residents in a household is a necessary practical consideration for conducting household-based surveys. Therefore, a marriage or partnership between a person usually resident in a household and a person who is a usual resident of another household (i.e. a visitor) is not recognised in the 'Relationship in household', 'Family composition', 'Household composition' or 'Social marital status' standards. However, a registered marriage between a person who is usually resident in a household and a person who is a usual resident of another household is recognised in the 'Registered marital status' standard.

Child

In these standards the definition of a child is primarily a function of an individual's relationship to other household members, regardless of age. However, all people under 15 years of age are defined as children. The identification and classification of children into different types is based on reported relationships and the presence of dependency relationships within the family. It is through the dependency relationships that the definition of a child is broadened beyond natural, adopted, step or foster son or daughter to include otherwise related and unrelated individuals aged under 15.

The definition of a child is:

• A child is a person of any age who is a natural, adopted, step, or foster son or daughter of a couple or lone parent, usually resident in the same household. A child is also any individual under 15, usually resident in the household, who forms a parent-child relationship with another member of the household. This includes otherwise related children under 15 and unrelated children under 15.

To be classified as a child, the person can have no partner or child of their own usually resident in the household.

Three types of child are identified in the 'Relationship in household' classification:

- Dependent child under 15.
- Dependent student.
- Non-dependent child.

The differentiation of children into these three types is based upon the dependency criterion and is designed to identify families with different structures and needs. Dependency as used in these standards refers to economic dependency and is applied only to the population of people who could be described as 'children'. It is therefore not intended to measure an aged or disabled person's dependency.

Dependent child

Dependency is assumed to exist when an individual living in a family household is likely to be unable to support themselves financially and is therefore reliant on another usually resident individual(s) for the provision of their financial needs (meals, accommodation, other expenses). Two barriers to full-time employment are used as indicators of economic dependency: age and student status.

The dependency criterion is applied to children under 15 and dependent students in slightly different ways. The reason for applying it to children under the age of 15 is that people of this age are not legally able to work full-time and thus cannot support themselves. This criterion applies not only to natural children but also to nephews, nieces, cousins and unrelated children who live with a family.

The concept of dependency is also applied to another group of people: those 15-24 years old and studying full-time (called 'Dependent students'). They are also assumed to be unable to support themselves financially as, by virtue of their student status, they are generally unable to work enough hours to do so. In this instance, the dependency criterion is not as widely applied as it is to children under 15: unrelated people who live with a family, and otherwise related family members such as nieces, nephews, cousins etc. who are studying full-time are assumed to receive support from outside the household. Therefore only natural, adopted, step, and foster children are defined as dependent students.

The ABS has extensively reviewed the concept of child dependency to determine the most appropriate and operationally feasible method of identifying dependency. As the concept uses economic rather than social, legal, psychological, physical or any other form of dependency, it was acknowledged that an actual measure of economic activity would be more accurate than the current student status indicator. However, practical collection considerations and the necessity to retain continuity in time series led the ABS to conclude that child dependency should continue to be measured by age and student status.

As children over the age of 15 who are not studying full-time can be employed full-time, they are classified as non-dependent children.

Nominal child and nominal parent

The composition of many Australian households and the relationships between their residents are more diverse than those generally regarded as being traditional 'nuclear' families. Often the relationship between adults in the household and dependent children (people aged under 15 or full-time students aged under 25) would not be captured by basic coding methods. This is explained in the 'Relationship in household' standard. To better reflect the nature of those relationships where to all intents and purposes a 'parent-child' relationship exists, and thereby facilitate a more accurate and analytically useful picture of the 'family-type arrangements' that may exist in those households, the ABS uses the concepts of the 'nominal child' and 'nominal parent'.

When a child under 15 is a usual resident of a dwelling where their parent is not a usual resident, that child must be allocated a 'nominal parent'. They thereby become a 'nominal child' who is subsequently treated, particularly for output purposes, as identical to a natural, adopted, step or foster child. Full-time students aged 15-24 years are never allocated nominal parents. Consequently if that student is a usual resident of a dwelling where their parent is not a usual resident, the student cannot be defined as 'dependent'. The student becomes a related (or unrelated) person in that household.

Income unit

The economic wellbeing of a person is not always readily apparent from their individual income e.g. a dependent child. However, the family as defined in these standards will in some cases be too broad to use as a basic statistical unit for analysis of income levels and distribution. Therefore the ABS assumes that there are groups of related people who, by virtue of their relationships, systematically pool all their income and savings and share equitably in the benefits derived from access to these financial resources. Such groups of related people are known as the income unit.

At the basis of the income unit is a relationship between people which is identified by their 'Relationship in household'. Unrelated people do not form income units together but are considered to be single people with sole control over their income, consumption and savings. In a given household an income unit may therefore be an individual, every person in a family or household, or a group somewhere in between. Income units consist in the first instance of people in a couple relationship and any dependent children. Lone parent income units are then identified. Any other person aged 15 or over who is not identified as a dependent student will form a separate one person income unit. Finally unattached children under 15 are allocated nominal parents.

Collection methods

Procedures for processing family variables

The following steps need to take place to process data about families:

- Identify the usual residents of the household.
- Describe the relationships between the usual residents using an initial household reference person.
- Apply the rules for forming families (see the rules for identifying and coding families in the 'Family composition' standard). At this stage it may also be necessary to reallocate the household and family reference person(s) depending on the complexity of the household (for further details see Appendix A of the 'Relationship in household' standard).
- Code 'Relationship in household', 'Family composition' and other variables as required.

Collection methods

While information on families can be collected using different methodologies it always follows the same sequence.

Initially, a 'Household reference person' is identified. This person is the first named person entered on the collection form and is called 'Person 1'. They are the reference point to which the 'Relationship in household' is anchored. 'Relationship in household' information provides information on 'Social marital status'. Once relationships within the household have been established and coded, reference is made to the ages of children and further questions about student status are asked to determine whether children aged 15-24 years are dependent or not. Next, rules are applied to the relationship and dependency information to establish the 'Family composition'. 'Family composition' data can then be used to determine the 'Household composition'. If required, additional questions can be asked to determine 'Registered marital status'.

In practice, identification of the 'Household reference person' is either a correction of the identification made in the field, which occurs later during the coding process, or more usually a result of the appropriate person being selected automatically.

Automatic selection of 'Person 1' can occur in two ways, depending on the method of collection:

- In self-completed collections such as the Census, the instruction on the form is to "Enter the householder or any adult household member as 'Person 1', and if present, the spouse or partner as 'Person 2'.
- In interviewer-based collections, the interviewer instruction is to ask "What are the names of all the people who usually live here?". As the respondent will usually list themselves first, they become 'Person 1' and thus the household reference person. Note that the ABS Interviewers Manual allows the respondent to nominate a different household member as Person 1 and the interviewer is advised to accept this provided that person is a suitable household reference person. For example, a person aged under 15 years is not suitable.

Standard question module

For the 'Relationship in household' question modules see the 'Standard question modules' section in the 'Relationship in household' standard.

Relationship in household

Background

The 'Relationship in household' variable facilitates the definition, collection and classification of household relationship data in statistical collections. Its derivation requires the supporting variables 'Age', 'Sex', 'Marital status', 'Full-time/part-time student status' and 'Family number'. Data can be output directly to the classification of 'Relationship in household', however its major

use is providing the basis for deriving the 'Family composition', 'Household composition', 'Income unit composition' and 'Social marital status' variables.

Terminology used in this standard is defined in the Glossary.

Introduction

Introduction to the Standard

The relationships classified by this variable are those between the reference person and each other member of the household. In a family household, the relationships classified are those between the family reference person and each family member.

Underlying concepts

Name of the variable

The name of the variable is 'Relationship in household'.

Nominal definition

The variable 'Relationship in household' is defined as:

• The relationships between people in a given household.

'Relationship in household' is an attribute of the counting unit 'person'.

Operational definition

Operationally, 'Relationship in household' is defined as the relationship between all persons who are usual residents of the household to the person who is chosen as the reference person.

The household reference person is either the respondent or the person nominated by the respondent as Person 1 on the collection form. In many cases they will be one and the same. See Appendix A of the 'Relationship in household' variable for details on identifying family and household reference persons.

A household is also often referred to as 'dwelling', as all the people in a household are in the same dwelling. In addition, a household can comprise more than one family living in the same dwelling.

Key points when applying the definition are:

- A household reference person is identified for all households.
- In households where no families are present, all relationships are identified with respect to the household reference person.
- If only one family is present in the household, the household reference person will also be the family reference person (see Appendix A of the Relationship in household variable for details on identifying household and family reference persons).
- In households with more than one family (i.e. multi-family households), each family will have its own family reference person.
- Each separate family living in the same household is considered a separate unit and is allocated a Family number. The family of the household reference person is the Primary family or Family number 1.
- In households with more than one family, the family reference persons of the non-Primary families describe their 'Relationship in household' to the household reference person by using the 'Relationship between families' standard.
- Natural, step, adoptive and foster relationships are all treated in the same way.
- All family households can also include unrelated individuals who are living in the household.
- Lone person and Group households never include related persons as they are non-family households.

Scope of the variable

'Relationship in household' applies to all usual residents of a dwelling. The dwelling may contain a one family household, or a multi-family household, or a group household or a lone person household.

Visitors are generally outside the scope of surveys using this classification as they are not usual residents of the selected

household. However, in collections such as the Census of Population and Housing where some information is collected about visitors to the household at the time of the collection, they can be identified using a supplementary code and output as non-classifiable (households).

Discussion of conceptual issues

Notions of what constitutes a family vary considerably. Some people consider their family to be the relatives with whom they live in the same dwelling. Others extend their definition of family to include relatives who live in other dwellings. For some, the notion of family includes people who are unrelated.

As ABS household surveys are based on the dwelling being enumerated, for practical reasons the concept of family is generally restricted to include only those persons usually resident in the same household. A concept of family which extends beyond the one household would make it impossible to identify discrete family units for the purposes of counting the number of families and describing their characteristics. In some family-specific ABS surveys, data is collected about wider family networks where the definition of a family is not constrained to one dwelling.

'Relationship in household' is primarily used for coding and classifying families and households, and the derivation of variables such as 'Family composition' and 'Household composition', rather than as an output variable in its own right.

Collection methods for this data vary between surveys and the Census of Population and Housing. Specifically, household surveys use a Computer Assisted Interviewing system while the Census has a self-completed form. This variation results in two collection-method-specific input classifications, as detailed in the 'Standard Input Categories' section (see the 'Collection Methods' page). The Standard Classification and Code Structure (see the 'Classification and Coding' page), and the different aggregates specified in the 'Standard output categories' section (see the 'Output' page), apply primarily to self-completed collections such as the Census of Population and Housing.

It is recognised that the household and family structures used by the ABS to report collection results may not adequately reflect the social and family relationships relevant in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of Australia. However, they do provide a comparison with the 'Family composition' and 'Household composition' of the non-Indigenous population.

Classification and coding

The classification criteria

Categories for 'Relationship in household' are based on the following criteria (in order of importance):

- Whether the person is in a Couple relationship.
- If so, whether the relationship is a registered marriage.
- Whether the person is in a Parent-child relationship.
- Whether the person is a Dependent child.
- Whether the person is in an Other family relationship.
- If so, the precise nature of that relationship.
- Sex.
- Family number.

Couple relationship

Denotes two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. The 'Relationship in household' variable distinguishes between registered and de facto marriages.

Parent-child relationships

Exist between a 'parent' and that person's 'child' when they are usual residents in the same dwelling. A parent must be 15 years of age or over, while a child can be any age and related to the parent through birth, adoption, step family formation or fostering.

A child is a person of any age who is a natural, adopted, step, foster or nominal son or daughter of a couple or lone parent who is a usual resident in the same household. A child is also any individual younger than 15 years of age, usually resident in the household, who forms a parent-child relationship with another member in the household. This includes otherwise related

children and unrelated children under 15 years. To be classified as a child, the person can have no identified partner or child of their own usually resident in the household: a separate family would be formed in that case. Nominal child allocation rules (where a child under 15 years is a usual resident of a dwelling in which their parent is not a usual resident and must therefore be allocated a 'nominal parent') are specified in the Coding Procedures section of the 'Family composition' standard.

Dependency in ABS standards refers to nominally economic dependency only. Age and student status determine dependency for this purpose on the assumption that children under 15 and full-time students aged 15-24 years are unlikely to be able to support themselves.

Three broad categories of child are included in the 'Relationship in household' classification:

- Child under 15 years (also referred to as a dependent child).
- Dependent student aged 15-24 years and studying full-time (also referred to as a dependent child).
- Non-dependent child.

An 'Other family relationship' is any familial or marital relationship between two people excluding couple relationships and parent-child relationships. This includes relationships between generations (e.g. grandparents and grandchildren) and first cousins (i.e. persons related through one common set of grandparents), but not second cousins and beyond. A full list of the familial relationships that fall within the scope of an 'other family relationship' is given in the 'Coding Procedures' section of the 'Family composition' standard.

Child

A person of any age who is a natural, adopted, step, foster or nominal son or daughter of a couple or lone parent who is a usual resident in the same household. A child is also any individual younger than 15 years of age, usually resident in the household, who forms a parent-child relationship with another member in the household. This includes otherwise related children and unrelated children under 15 years. To be classified as a child, the person can have no identified partner or child of their own usually resident in the household: a separate family would be formed in that case. Nominal child allocation rules (where a child under 15 years is a usual resident of a dwelling in which their parent is not a usual resident and must therefore be allocated a 'nominal parent') are specified in the Coding Procedures section of the 'Family composition' standard.

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An 'Other family relationship' is any familial or marital relationship between two people excluding couple relationships and parent-child relationships. This includes relationships between generations (e.g. grandparents and grandchildren) and first cousins (i.e. persons related through one common set of grandparents), but not second cousins and beyond. A full list of the familial relationships that fall within the scope of an 'other family relationship' is given in the 'Coding Procedures' section of the 'Family composition' standard.

The standard classification and code structure

'Relationship in household' is a four level hierarchical classification with detailed categories of the classification (i.e. codes 15-18) coded using two digits rather than three or four. This is because many ABS surveys do not make the distinction between same-sex and opposite-sex couples in their standard output. This level of output is, however, available from the Census of Population and Housing.

The categories are as follows:

1	Husband, wife or partner			
	11 In a registered marriage			
	12	In a de facto marriage		
		15 In a de facto marriage, opposite-sex couple		
		16 In a de facto marriage, same-sex couple		
		17 In a de facto marriage, male same-sex couple		
		18 In a de facto marriage, female same-sex couple		
2	Lone parent			
	21	Lone parent		
3	Child under 15			
	31	Natural or adopted child under 15		
	32	Step child under 15		
	33	Foster child under 15		
	34	Grandchild under 15		
	35	Otherwise related child under 15		
	36	Unrelated child under 15		
4	Dependent student (aged 15	5-24 and studying full-time)		
	41	Natural or adopted dependent student		
	42	Student step child		
	43	Student foster child		
5	Non-dependent child			
	51	Non-dependent natural or adopted child		
	52	Non-dependent step child		
	53	Non-dependent foster child		
6	Other related individual			
	61	Brother/sister		
	62	Father/mother		
	63	Non-dependent grandchild		
	64	Grandfather/grandmother		
	65	Cousin		
	66	Uncle/aunt		
	67	Nephew/niece		
	69	Other related individual not elsewhere classified		
7	Non-family member			
	71	Unrelated individual living in a family household		
	72	Group household member		
	73	Lone person		

Residual code '69' is reserved for 'Other related individual not elsewhere classified'. Two examples are great uncle and second cousin.

Supplementary codes can be used for responses outside the scope of the classification but in-scope for the particular collection. This allows information to be retained while maintaining the distinction between the usual residents of a household, and visitors and others. Code 91 is recommended for responses of 'Visitor' in collections in which visitors to a household are inscope of the collection, such as the Census of Population and Housing. Code 99 is recommended for 'Other non-classifiable relationships' of people if required. Census also uses the additional supplementary code 'VV' to identify overseas visitors.

Scope of the classification

The 'Relationship in household' classification applies to all usual residents of a dwelling. Visitors to the dwelling are generally outside the scope of this classification.

Application of the classification to other variables

The categories of the 'Relationship in household' classification can be output in their own right. They can also be cross-classified by a range of other socio-demographic variables as the basis for identifying family and income units. The output of the classification is used directly as input to the 'Income unit composition', 'Family composition' and 'Household composition' standards.

Coding procedures

Data for 'Relationship in household' is captured from a direct question and coded to a standard input category. The relationship to Person 1 is coded so that the family units in the household can be formed. Subsequent examination of the families produced

from coding can confirm whether that Person 1 satisfies the criteria for a household reference person. Rules for forming families in all collections which aim to identify the structure of families within households can be found in the 'Family composition' standard.

A step child must be identified as being the step son or step daughter of one or both partners in a couple family, or as the step child of the lone parent in a one-parent family. In self-completed collections, a person must identify as being the child of one but not both people in a couple relationship, or be specifically identified as the step child of either one of the persons in a couple relationship or a lone parent, to be coded as a step child. However, in standard coding in most household surveys, the step child becomes indistinguishable from any other type of child once a code is allocated. Similarly, in these household surveys a person who is coded as a step-parent or step-sibling becomes indistinguishable from any other type of parent or sibling once a code is allocated.

In self-completed collections a person who does not form a couple or parent-child relationship (i.e. is not part of a family) will be coded to the appropriate type of relationship in the 'Other related individual' codes. For example, in a household composed of a reference person, spouse, daughter, son, and mother-in-law, the mother-in-law will be coded to 'Father/mother', which is effectively their relationship to one member of the family.

The 'Family number' identifier allows the coding of separate families from the 'Relationship in household' data. A single digit code is assigned to each person to indicate the family to which each person belongs as follows:

- code '0' is assigned to persons who are not members of families
- code '1' is assigned to all family members in a one family household, or to members of the first family in multi-family households
- code '2' is assigned to members of the second family in multi-family households, and so on.

The total number of families which can effectively be identified in a given collection may be limited by operational constraints. For example, up to nine families will be coded in ABS household surveys if the data is provided, and generally a maximum of 15 usual residents can be entered into the survey instrument. In Censuses of Population and Housing up to and including the 2011 Census, a limit of three families could be coded per dwelling due to the constraints of the printed self-completed form.

Coding indexes

A coding index has been developed to assist in the implementation and use of the 'Relationship in Household' standard, and should be used when coding responses to questions relating to relationship. It contains a comprehensive list of the most probable responses to questions relating to relationships and their correct classification codes. The coding index enables responses to be coded accurately and quickly to the appropriate category of the classification.

Collection methods

Standard question module

The initial requirement in the Interviewer-based collection's question module is to determine who are the usual residents of the household. This is achieved by asking the following question:

'What are the names of all the people who usually live here?'

Each person named is assigned a row number and a person number. The first person named is identified as Person 1, the second person as Person 2 and so on (see Appendix A of the 'Relationship in household' variable for details on identifying family and household reference persons).

The following question is then asked of all usual residents of the household, except for Person 1:

Q1. What is (Your/the Person's) relationship to (Person 1)?

If the response to Q1 is anything other than 'spouse', 'partner', 'father', 'mother', 'son' (including step, foster and adopted relationships), and 'daughter' (including step, foster and adopted relationships), and there are more than two usual residents in the household, a further question is asked:

Q2. Are/Is (You/the Person) more closely related to anyone else in the household? (For example, as a Husband/Wife, Partner or Child.)

This allows the identification of additional families within the household. It may be asked of some, all or none of the usual residents of the household.

The identification of de facto couples, including same-sex couples, is reliant on respondents volunteering this information in reply to general questions about relationships between members of the household. More detailed questioning on this subject is considered intrusive.

The remaining questions are asked of usual residents of the household. However, they can be restricted to people aged between 15-24 years if it is operationally feasible. The following question is used to determine whether persons who are 15 to 24 years of age are dependent children. In some collections the information obtained from Q3 (and Q4) below on student status is instead obtained from question modules on education topics. Where this occurs these questions need not be asked as part of the 'Relationship in household' module.

Q3.	Is [the person]/are you confull-time student?	urrently studying at a scho	ool, TAFE college, universit	y or other educational institution as a
	Yes			
	No			
quest	ion above:			uestions are asked instead of the y or other educational institution?
	Yes		to Q4	
	No		end	
Q4.	Is [the person]/are ye	ou currently studying full-	time or part-time?	
	Full-time			
	Part-time			

Self-completed collections

The standard question module for self-completed collections consists of two questions. Self-completed collections do not have the benefit of an interviewer to help select the appropriate household reference person so a simple statement should be included as part of the instructions for Question 1. In the 2011 Census of Population and Housing, the instructions were:

- "Person 1: The householder if present, otherwise any adult member of the household."
- "Person 2: The spouse or partner of 'Person 1' if present, otherwise any person present."
- "Persons 3 to 6: Any other person present in the household."

As shown below, Question 1 does not require a response from Person 1. Each subsequent person is required to mark the appropriate box in response to the above instruction. The set of response categories for Person 2 differs from those used for Person 3 and so on.

Q1.	What is the perso	hat is the person's relationship to Person 1/Person 2?			
	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3		
	No answer required.	☐ Husband or wife of Person 1	☐ Child of both Person 1 & Person 2		
		☐ De facto partner of Person 1	☐ Child of Person 1 only		
		☐ Child of Person 1	☐ Child of Person 2 only		
		☐ Step-child of Person 1	☐ Brother or sister of Person 1		
		☐ Brother or sister of Person 1	☐ Unrelated flatmate or co-tenant of Person 1		
		☐ Unrelated flatmate or co-tenant of Person 1	☐ Other relationship to Person 1		
		☐ Officiated natifiate of co-tenant of Person 1	please specify		
		☐ Other relationship to Person 1			
		please specify			

A second question is asked of all usual residents of the household. Responses to the question determine whether any person aged 15-24 years is classified as a dependent child.

Q2.	Is the person attending a school or any other educational institution?		
	Include pre-school and external or correspondence students		
	No		
	Yes, full-time student		
	Yes, part-time student		

Standard input categories

'Relationship in household' data, as originally collected, are dependent on who is Person 1. If Person 1 proves not to be an appropriate reference person on which to base 'Family composition' coding during subsequent processing, for example when a non-dependent child is selected rather than that person's parent, raw data must be further processed in order to obtain the input categories of the 'Relationship in household' classification (see Appendix A of the 'Relationship in household' variable for details on identifying family and household reference persons).

As mentioned in the section on 'Discussion of Conceptual Issues' (see the 'Underlying Concepts' page), collection methods for this data vary between surveys and Censuses. This results in two input classifications, specifically for interviewer-based and self-completed forms, as follows:

Interviewer-based collections

In Interviewer-based collections, the 'Relationship in household' categories are designed specifically for the process of family formation. Any requirement that detailed 'Relationship in household' data be obtained from household surveys would necessitate asking for additional information. This would usually only take place in the context of a household survey that is intended to investigate particular issues.

The input categories used for household surveys describe the relationships of people in the household to Person 1, who may not be the appropriate Reference Person. No code numbers are given for the categories because any codes relating to the category names are used only for processing those categories into family formations. There are nine groups of categories:

Household reference person

Husband Wife Spouse Partner	Father Step-father Adopted father Foster father Mother Step-mother Adopted mother Foster mother	Father in-law Brother in-law Uncle Grandfather Great-uncle Great-grandfather Nephew Great-grandson Great-nephew	
Boyfriend De facto husband Girlfriend De facto wife Fiance Lover	Brother Step-brother Adopted brother Foster brother Half-brother Sister Step-sister Adopted sister Foster sister Half-sister	Mother in-law Sister in-law Aunt Grandmother Great-aunt Great-grandmother Niece Great-granddaughter Great-niece Guardian Cousin	
Son Step-son Adopted son Foster son Daughter Step-daughter Adopted daughter Foster daughter	Son in-law Grandson Daughter in-law Granddaughter	Boarder Not applicable Not related	

Self-completed collections

For Self-completed collections, the standard input categories are the two digit categories provided in the 'Standard Classification and Code Structure' section (see the 'Classification and Coding' page).

For operational reasons, code 91 is recommended for responses of 'Visitor' in collections in which visitors to a household are in-scope of the collection, such as the Census of Population and Housing. The code 99 is recommended for 'Other non-

classifiable relationships' of people if required. Censuses also use an additional supplementary code 'VV' to identify overseas visitors.

Output

Standard output categories

Output includes publications, user guides, data cubes and microdata.

The following are the recommended standard output categories for data on 'Relationship in household' for use in self-completed collections such as the Census of Population and Housing only. This is because the input classifications for the Census are different to those for household surveys as discussed in the 'Collection Methods' page.

Output for self-completed collections

In a registered marriage
In a de facto marriage
Lone parent
Lone parent
Child under 15
Natural or adopted child under 15
Step child under 15
Foster child under 15
Grandchild
Unrelated child under 15
Otherwise related child under 15
Dependent student
Natural or adopted dependent student
Non-dependent step child
Non-dependent foster child
Other related individual
Brother/sister
Father/mother
Non-dependent grandchild
Grandfather/grandmother
Cousin
Uncle/aunt
Nephew/niece
Other related individual (n.e.c.)
Non-family member
Unrelated individual in family household
Group household member
Lone person
Visitor

It is standard to aggregate data from these categories in interviewer-based and self-completed collections as follows, and footnotes and/or glossary entries must describe the standard output categories which comprise each aggregated output category:

Output aggregated by family member and non-family member:

Family member		
Husband, wife or partner		
Lone parent		
Child under 15		
Dependent student		
Non-dependent child		
Other related individual		
Non-family member		
Unrelated individual in family household		
Group household member		
Lone person		

Note: Visitors are not included in this output aggregation.

Output aggregating dependent children where the two categories 'Child under 15' and 'Dependent student' are aggregated to form a single output category of 'Dependent child':

Output aggregating dependent children:

In a registered marriage	
In a de facto marriage	
Lone parent	
Lone parent	
Dependent child	
Dependent natural or adopted child	
Dependent step child	
Dependent foster child	
Grandchild under 15	
Otherwise related child under 15	
Unrelated child under 15	
Non-dependent child	
Non-dependent natural or adopted child	
Non-dependent step child	
Non-dependent foster child	
Other related individual	
Brother/sister	
Father/mother	
Non-dependent grandchild	
Grandfather/grandmother	
Cousin	
Uncle/aunt	
Nephew/niece	
Other related individual (n.e.c.)	
Non-family member	
Unrelated individual in family household	
Group household member	
Lone person	
Visitor	
Visitor	

Output aggregating 'Relationship in household' with 'Family composition' can be used if appropriate. Note that for collections where 'Children under 15' are out of scope, such as ABS Labour Force collections, the category 'Child under 15' may be omitted.

Output aggregating 'Relationship in household' with 'Family composition'

Family member
Husband, wife or partner
With children under 15
With no children under 15 and with dependent students
With non-dependent children only
Without children
Lone parent
With children under 15
With no children under 15 and with dependent students
With non-dependent children only
Child under 15
Dependent student
Non-dependent child
Other related individual
Non-family member
Lone person
Not living alone

It is also possible to further aggregate the above table as follows:

Family member

Husband, wife or partner		
Lone parent		
Child under 15		
Dependent student		
Non-dependent child		
Other related individual		
Non-family member		
Lone person		
Not living alone		

Mandatory footnotes and other output information are required when disseminating data even though all the outputs stated above are standard. A summary of these footnotes and output information follows:

- Glossary definitions must be listed for every standard output label used.
- The separate identification of same-sex couple families is not recommended for standard output because the reporting of same-sex couple relationships is likely to be low. Such data would therefore be expected to be statistically insignificant, to exhibit high standard errors and potentially breach confidentiality requirements in some collections.
- The abbreviation 'n.e.c.' must be footnoted with the explanation 'not elsewhere classified'.
- The categories 'With children under 15', 'With no children under 15 and with dependent students' and 'With non-dependent children only' are mutually exclusive:
 - the category 'With children under 15' may or may not include the presence of dependent students and non-dependent children
 - similarly, the category 'With no children under 15 and with dependent students' may or may not include non-dependent children.
- These facts must be stated in a footnote.
- The category 'Not living alone' is an aggregation of two categories from the standard classification: 'Unrelated individual in family household' and 'Group household member'. This must be stated in a footnote or explained by a Glossary entry for 'Not living alone'.
- The distinction between step child and the other types of child is optional, and depends on whether this information is available from the response data.

Supporting variables

When members of a household have been confirmed as usual residents of the dwelling, the following supporting variables are required for deriving a valid 'Relationship in household':

'Age'

• The age of each person is required for identifying children and other dependent relationships.

'Sex'

• The sex of each person is required to identify same-sex couple relationships.

'Marital status'

• In collections that distinguish between registered and de facto (social) marriages, 'Registered marital status' is a required supporting variable for 'Relationship in household'. However, for some collections the distinction between 'married' and 'not married' in the 'Social marital status' classification is sufficient for output requirements.

'Full-time/part-time student status'

• This is used to determine whether household members who are 15-24 years of age are studying and therefore considered to be dependent children.

'Family number'

• Separate families living in the same household are treated as separate units by the 'Relationship in household' classification. Each family unit in a household is assigned a Family number; the same family number is then assigned to each person in that family.

Related classifications

The 'Relationship in household' classification is closely linked to the following standard classifications:

- · 'Family composition'.
- 'Household composition'.
- · 'Registered marital status'.
- 'Social marital status'.
- · 'Income unit composition'.

Changes to any of these classifications cannot be considered in isolation and all possible ramifications concerning the other classifications should be investigated before any change is adopted.

Appendix A: Identifying household and family reference persons

Introduction

Collection of household and family composition data relies on a respondent from the household identifying all the usual residents of that household and listing them in order beginning with 'Person 1'. In practice, the respondent will usually be Person 1 but this is not always the case.

In most cases the selected Person 1 will prove to be appropriate as the household reference person. However, this is not certain until preliminary relationship coding has taken place. A household reference person is used as the basis for the identification of families and income units and the classification of the household. Relationships in the household are formed by describing each other person's relationship to Person 1. This process will show whether the selected Person 1 is appropriate to be the household reference person.

Families identified through application of 'Relationship in household' each have a family reference person. In a single family household, the household reference person and the family reference person are the same person. In multi-family households there is a family reference person for each family and one of the family reference persons is also designated as the household reference person. Once household and family reference persons have been properly identified according to the criteria below, it can be determined whether relationships within the household require recoding (if Person 1 is not found to be the appropriate household reference person) or that the relationships already coded can be confirmed.

Procedure

To collect 'Relationship in household' data all usual residents of the household must be identified. The relationships of all usual residents of the household to the first usual resident named are then identified. Next, for each usual resident, any closer relationships to a usual resident other than Person 1 are identified. The relationships described are used to establish whether any families are present in the household. If so, a family reference person is selected for each family. If multiple families are present, a household reference person is selected from among the family reference persons. If no families are present, a household reference person is chosen according to the non-family criteria described below.

Standard hierarchical set of criteria for identifying reference persons

Reference persons must be aged 15 years or over and are identified according to:

Family criteria

- they are one of the partners in a registered or de facto marriage; or
- a lone parent.

or

Non-family criteria

- they are the person with the highest income; or
- the owner, purchaser or primary rent payer of the household accommodation; or
- the eldest person.

Interviewer-based collections

The initial requirement in the interviewer-based question module is to determine the usual residents of the household. This is achieved by asking the following question:

'What are the names of all the people who usually live here?'

Each person named is assigned a row number and a person number. The first person named is identified as Person 1, the second person as Person 2 and so on.

Self-completed collections

Respondents are prompted with instructions to help select a suitable Person 1 - and thereby a suitable household reference person - on self-completed collection forms as this facilitates family coding and minimises subsequent re-processing. For example, in the 2011 Census of Population and Housing the instruction given was:

'Enter the householder or any adult household member as 'Person 1', and if present, the spouse or partner as 'Person 2''.

Once again, a suitable household reference person can be substituted during data processing if the nominated person proves to be unsuitable (e.g. where a child is entered as Person 1).

Substituting a suitable reference person

In many cases, the person nominated as Person 1 will prove to be a suitable reference person.

There will be times, however, when Person 1 is not the most suitable person to be the household reference person because he or she does not fulfil the criteria. The household reference person, while primarily a device to assist coding and processing relationship data, can also be used to create output variables (e.g. occupation of household reference person). It is therefore necessary to use the set of hierarchical criteria for identifying reference persons listed above to ensure consistency in identifying the household reference person. Depending upon the methodology being used to collect relationship data, this substitution of an appropriate reference person for an inappropriate one can be done after the collection of data, or through an input editing system.

One family households

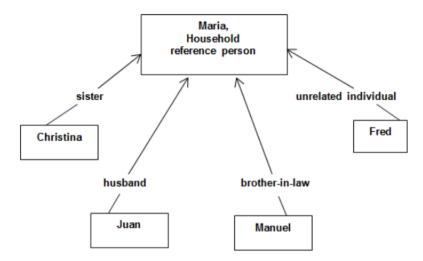
Where Person 1 is not appropriate to be the household reference person, the relationships described in the raw data may be unsuitable for determining 'Relationship in household'. For example, if the household reference person is a son in a one family household comprised of his mother, father and sister the data would need to be processed so that one of the parents is the household reference person. Each other family member is then described in relation to that parent. This reallocation of the household reference person is required for more efficient 'Relationship in household' coding, because the classification is designed to classify children in relation to their parents rather than parents in relation to their children.

Multi-family households

Another case when the household reference person may need to be modified is in a multi-family household. Multi-family households constitute only a small proportion of the total number of households but require careful coding to maintain the correct linkages.

In households that contain more than one family, a family reference person must be identified for each family. The following example illustrates how further processing is required when the second question (on any closer relationships that are present within the household) is asked. Consider a five person household consisting of two sisters (Maria and Christina), their husbands (Juan and Manuel respectively) and an unrelated individual (Fred). If Maria is chosen as the household reference person then Manuel is coded as a brother-in-law.

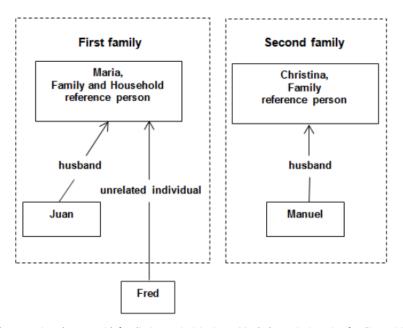
Diagram 1: Relationship in household to household reference person



A diagram showing the coding of the relationship of the household reference person in a multi-family household. If Maria is chosen as the household reference person, the relationship to Christina would be coded as her sister; the relationship to Juan would be coded as her husband; the relationship to Manuel would be coded as her brother-in-law, and the relationship to Fred would be coded as an unrelated individual.

At the family level, however, the household is considered to consist of two families. As Maria was initially selected as Person 1, and therefore the household reference person, either Christina or Manuel must be chosen as the family reference person for the second family.

Diagram 2: Relationship in household to family reference persons



A diagram showing a multi-family household where Maria is coded as the family and household reference person for the first family, and Christina is coded as the family reference person for the second family. Juan, Maria's husband, is classed in the first family and Manuel, Christina's husband, is classed in the second family. Fred is categorised as an unrelated individual known to the first family.

Note that question two in the interviewer-based question module (see the 'Standard Question Module' on the 'Collection Method' page) reveals a two family household if any of the four persons in either family is chosen as Person 1. In this example, when the correct procedures are applied and the best choice is made for the household reference person, a two family household is quickly identified and each family is coded as a couple family without children having no other related individuals in the household. In the example, Fred is an unrelated individual living in a family household. Note also that if Fred was chosen as Person 1, even though the second question would eventually establish a two family household, the existence of the sibling relationship between Maria and Christina would not be detected.

Selecting a household reference person

Once the household members have been allocated to families (assuming there are families present), the responses provided on the collection form are further processed so that a reference person is chosen for each family. For clarification of the rules for

determining families in multi-family households refer to 'Rules for Identifying Families' in the standard for 'Family composition'.

To select each family reference person the standard hierarchical set of criteria for identifying reference persons (see above) is applied to each family from the top down. Only then is one of the family reference persons designated as the household reference person. To select the household reference person in a multi-family household, a further set of hierarchical criteria (which follows the standard hierarchic set of criteria for identifying reference persons above) is applied to the family reference persons as listed below:

Family criteria - one of the partners is in a registered or de facto marriage

- If only one of the family reference persons is a partner in a couple relationship, that reference person is selected as the household reference person.
- If more than one family reference person is a partner in a couple relationship, the reference person with dependent children is chosen
- If more than one partner has dependent children present, or none of the marriage partners has dependent children present, the non-family criteria (income, owner with or without a mortgage, primary renter, eldest person) are applied to the married family reference persons, in the order stated above, so that one household reference person is chosen.

Family criteria - a lone parent

- If none of the family reference persons is in a registered or de facto marriage, a lone parent is chosen.
- If more than one lone parent is present the non-family criteria (income, owner with or without a mortgage, primary rent payer, eldest person) are applied to the lone parent reference persons, in the order stated above, so that one household reference person is chosen.

Non-family criteria

• If none of the family reference persons has been chosen on the basis of the family criteria (one partner in a registered or de facto marriage, a lone parent) or there are no family reference persons, the remaining non-family criteria (income, owner with or without a mortgage, primary rent payer, eldest person) are applied in the order stated above so that one household reference person is chosen.

Family composition

The standard variable 'Family composition' identifies the structure of a family living together in a household. This variable is essential to analyse the social and economic wellbeing of families and the family members.

Terminology used in this standard is defined in the Glossary.

Introduction

Introduction to the Standard

'Family composition' is partly derived from the standard variable 'Relationship in household', which is used to determine family relationships. Other related variables are 'Household composition', 'Relationship between families', Income unit composition', 'Social marital status' and 'Registered marital status'.

The 'Family composition' standard replaced the 'Family type' standard in 2005 and the categories are fully compatible. Correspondence tables are provided in Appendix A of this Standard to support time series comparisons.

Underlying concepts

Name of variable

The name of the variable is 'Family composition'.

Nominal definition

The variable 'Family composition' is nominally defined as:

• The composition of the family based on the relationships between family members usually resident in the same household.

The general notion of the term 'family' includes relatives whether they live together or not. However in survey research it is necessary to place a practical limit on the extent of family for the purely pragmatic purpose of being able to collect family data.

The nominal definition of 'Family composition' is therefore restricted to related people living together in the same dwelling/household.

The concept of 'family' is defined as:

• Two or more related people who usually live together.

The three fundamental concepts of Family at a broad level are:

- A family must consist of more than one person.
- Family members must be related.
- Family members must live in the same household.

This standard identifies families and different types of families using characteristics such as the size of the family and the relationships between family members.

'Family composition' is an attribute of the counting unit 'family' and, by extension, of the counting unit 'person' for all persons who are members of families.

Operational definition(s)

Operationally, 'family' is defined as:

• Two or more persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, and who are usually resident in the same household. The basis of a family is formed by identifying the presence of a couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship or other blood relationship. Some households will, therefore, contain more than one family.

Detailed rules are required to define an operational methodology for identifying separate families. These rules are specified in the section on 'Coding procedures' (see 'Classification and Coding' page).

The nominal definition constrains a family within a household and only consists of related people 'usually resident' within that household. The definition of 'household' is therefore fundamental to the definition of 'family'. The important points arising from this definition are:

- A family must consist of at least two persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age.
- A family is identified only from persons who are usually resident within a specific household: family members living in another household are therefore excluded from being part of the same family.
- Registered and de facto marriages are accorded equal status.
- Non-related individuals living in the same household (e.g. friend, boarder, housekeeper) are not counted as family members if they are 15 years of age or over.
- Non-related children under 15 years of age living in the household will be assigned a nominal 'parent' to become part of the family.
- More than one family can be identified within a single household if more than one group of people satisfy the criteria for forming a family.
- All related individuals not forming a family within a household, however, are assigned as members of one and only one family. This is an important qualification of the nominal definition.

Operationally, 'Family composition' is defined as:

• The differentiation of families based on the presence or absence of couple relationships, parent-child relationships, child dependency relationships or other familial relationships, in that order of precedence.

The method for operationalising 'Family composition' is outlined in the section on 'Rules for identifying families' (see 'Classification and Coding' page).

The 'Family composition' of each family is coded from the specific relationships that exist between a single 'family reference person' and each member of that family. 'Family composition' is then coded on the basis of whether the types of relationships listed below are present or not in the family, in the following order of precedence:

- couple relationship defined as a registered or de facto marriage
- parent-child relationship defined as a relationship between two persons usually resident in the same household. The child

is attached to the parent via a natural, adoptive, step, foster or child dependency relationship. (For information on 'nominal children' see the section on 'Discussion of conceptual issues' below)

- child dependency relationship defined as including all children under the age of 15 (whether related or unrelated to the family reference person) and those natural, step, adopted or foster children who are full-time students 15-24 years of age
- 'other' relationship defined as including all those persons related by blood or by marriage who are not covered by the above relationships.

Consider the example of two elderly brothers living with the family of the daughter of one of the brothers. The daughter's family forms the basic family of the household and the two brothers are both allocated to this family unit as related individuals. The two brothers do not form a separate family in their own right in addition to the daughter's family because they are related to a couple family or one-parent family already present in the household. However, if the two brothers were living in a dwelling with a family to whom they were not related, they would then form a family in their own right and be classified as an 'other family'.

Scope of the variable

The 'Family composition' variable applies to all families.

Discussion of conceptual issues

Nominal child and nominal parent

In many households in Australia the relationships between people and the composition of the households are more diverse than traditional 'nuclear' families. Often the relationships between adults in the household and dependent children (aged under 15 or full-time students aged under 25) would not be captured by the basic coding methods described in the 'Relationship in household' standard. In order to better reflect the nature of those relationships, where to all intents and purposes a 'parent-child' relationship does exist, the ABS uses the concepts of the 'nominal child' and 'nominal parent' to allow these relationships to be captured while maintaining a relatively simple set of family arrangements for analytical purposes. See 'Definition of dependent children and 'nominal child' rules' in the 'Coding procedures' section of the 'Classification and Coding' page for further details.

Classification and coding

The classification criteria

The four basic criteria used to structure the 'Family composition' classification are applied in the following order:

- · Couple relationship.
- · Parent-child relationship.
- Child dependency.
- Other blood relationship.

The first three of the above criteria are also used to determine 'Income unit composition'.

The standard classification

'Family composition' is a four level hierarchical classification from broad (level 1) through to detailed (level 4).

The code structure

The code structure for 'Family composition' at all levels is presented below. The category titles are self-explanatory; brief descriptions may be found in the Glossary.

The categories in the classification are:

1	COUPLE FAMILY WITH NO CHILDREN				
	12	Couple family with no children			
		122 Couple family with no children			
		1222 Couple family with no children			
2	cou	PLE FAMILY WITH CHILDREN			
	21	Couple family with children under 15			
		211 Couple family with children under 15 and dependent students			
		2111 Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children			
		2112 Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children			
		212 Couple family with children under 15 and no dependent students			
		2121 Couple family with children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children			
		2122 Couple family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children			
	22	Couple family with no children under 15			
		221 Couple family with no children under 15 and with dependent students			
		2211 Couple family with no children under 15, and with dependent students and non-dependent children			
		2212 Couple family with no children under 15, and with dependent students and no non-dependent children			
		222 Couple family with no children under 15 and no dependent students			
		2221 Couple family with no children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children			
3	ONE PARENT FAMILY				
	31	One parent family with children under 15			
		311 One parent family with children under 15 and dependent students			
		3111 One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children			
		3112 One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children			
		312 One parent family with children under 15 and no dependent students			
		3121 One parent family with children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children			
		3122 One parent family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children			
	32	One parent family with no children under 15			
		321 One parent family with no children under 15 and with dependent students			
		3211 One parent family with no children under 15, and with dependent students and non-dependent children			
		3212 One parent family with no children under 15, and with dependent students and no non-dependent children			
		322 One parent family with no children under 15 and no dependent students			
		3221 One parent family with no children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children			
9	отн	ER FAMILY			
	92	Other family			
		922 Other family			
		9222 Other family			
		·			

Residual categories and codes

The category '9 Other family' is reserved as a residual category. All other level 1 categories in the classification are exhaustive and therefore do not require residual categories and codes.

Supplementary codes

Two types of supplementary codes are used to process inadequately described responses in statistical collections:

- those ending in zero are called 'not further defined' (n.f.d.) codes. These are used to code responses that cannot be coded to the four digit level, but can be coded to the three (with one zero), two (with two zeros) or one digit level (with three zeros)
- those commencing with zero are used to process the responses 'Not stated/Inadequately described', which do not provide sufficient information to be coded to any level of the structure, and when no response is given. In the Census the code '@@@@' is used for 'Not applicable'.

Scope of the classification

The 'Family composition' classification applies to all families. It also applies to households where a nominal parent has been designated for family coding purposes.

Coding procedures

Responses to the 'Family composition' variable are coded directly to the codes of the classification, as described above.

Rules for identifying families

There are nine rules for identifying a family and allocating individuals to it. These rules are listed below in the order in which they are applied.

Criterion for forming a family

Rule 1

A family can only be formed from persons usually resident in the same dwelling/household, one of whom must be 15 years of age or over.

Types of family which can be formed

Rule 2

A couple family exists if two people both 15 years of age or over have formed a couple relationship. This is defined as two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. The relationship is described by a respondent using terms such as 'husband', 'wife', 'spouse', 'de facto', 'partner' etc.

Rule 3

A lone parent-to-child relationship forms the nucleus of a family when the parent is not a partner in a couple relationship, the child is not a partner in a couple relationship, and the child has no children of his or her own living in the same household. If two or more children are present in a one parent family, the nucleus is formed between the parent and eldest child.

Rule 4

If two people in the household are related, but not through a couple family or one parent family relationship, they form the nucleus of an 'Other family'. Possible relationships that can form such families are listed in Rule 9 below. The nucleus of an Other family is formed by the two people with the closest relationship as described in Rule 7e below. An Other family can only be formed by people who are not related to any couple family or one parent family already present in the household.

Allocation to families of persons not in the nucleus

Rule 5

People not directly forming the couple family nucleus or one parent family nucleus are allocated to the family nucleus to which they are most closely related. For example, children of a couple are allocated to that couple and children of a one parent family are allocated to the family nucleus of their parent and eldest sibling unless they form a couple or one parent family themselves.

Multi-family households

Rule 6

A separate family nucleus is formed for each couple family and each lone parent family. If there is more than one family in a household, these are known as multi-family households.

Order of priority in special circumstances

Rule 7

The formation of the family nucleus and the subsequent attaching of people to this nucleus has a set of priority rules in both single and multi-family households. If there is any doubt about which way to form the family, use the following rules in the order listed below:

- a. Most recent generation rule
- b. Eldest child rule
- c. Child to female parent rule
- d. Closest relationship rule
- e. Eldest relative rule

The first three rules apply predominantly to parent-child relationships. Rules 7d and 7e are used initially when doubt arises from family relationships other than parent-child relationships: only when these Rules are unsuccessful should Rules 7a, 7b and 7c be applied, in that order. Explanations of the Rules are provided below.

Rule 7a) Most recent generation rule

Where a lone parent-child relationship exists for more than one generation in the same household, the most recent generation

forms the family nucleus. For example, if a household contains a 70-year-old parent with no partner present, a 50-year-old daughter and her 20-year-old son, then the 50-year-old and the 20-year-old form the family nucleus and the 70-year-old is attached to the family as a 'father/mother (other related individual)'.

An example of the most recent generation rule in a multi-family household is a household consisting of a couple aged 75 and 73 (= family 1) who live with their son aged 50, and his daughter aged 20 and her husband aged 22 (= family 2). In this case, the son aged 50 could be attached to family 1 as a 'non-dependent child' or family 2 as a 'father/mother (other related individual)'. The most recent generation rule attaches him to family 2, the younger family, as a 'father/mother (other related individual)'.

Rule 7b) Eldest child rule

Other situations where a person could be allocated to more than one family in the household may be resolved by the application of the eldest child rule. For example, take a multi-family household composed of a widower who lives with his son (aged 35) and daughter (aged 25), where the son has formed a family nucleus with a partner (= family 1) and the daughter has a child present, thereby forming a one parent family nucleus (= family 2). Using the eldest child rule the widower is attached to the family nucleus of his eldest child, i.e. family 1, as a 'father/mother (other related individual)'.

Rule 7c) Child to female parent rule

Where the parents of a child or children no longer consider themselves a couple but still live in the same household, then the child to female parent rule is used to form a lone parent family nucleus comprising the mother and eldest child, with other children of the mother attached to this nucleus. This rule is a generalisation that applies in the absence of data collection about custody arrangements. The father is attached to this family as a relative of the eldest child, unless he is part of a separate family nucleus.

Rule 7d) Closest relationship rule

In a multi-family household where a person is an 'other related individual' and is related to more than one family (e.g. they are an aunt to one family but a grandmother to another) he or she should be allocated to the family where the closer relationship lies. Relationships by lineage (vertical) take precedence over other types of relationships, for example grandmother over aunt, or aunt over cousin.

In a similar situation, where there is a multi-family household consisting of a couple aged 75 and 73 (= family 1) who live with their nephew aged 50, his niece aged 20 and the niece's husband aged 22 (= family 2), it is not possible to use Rule 7d to determine where the nephew's closer relationship lies. Therefore Rule 7a, the most recent generation rule, is applied and the nephew aged 50 is attached to family 2 as an uncle (i.e. as an 'other related individual').

Rule 7e) Eldest relative rule

In a multi-family household where it is possible to allocate a person to more than one family using the same relationship (e.g. she is an aunt to the family of either of her two nephews), the person is allocated to the family of his or her eldest relative.

'Other' families

Rule 8

Individuals can be attached to the 'other family' nucleus if they are related to either one of the people forming the nucleus or to any other person added to the 'other family' provided they do not form, or cannot be allocated to, a couple family or lone parent family in the household.

Relationship terms

Rule 9

The following familial relationships are included in the definition of the term 'related':

Self	Sister	Nephew	Grandmother
Husband	Step-sister	Step-nephew	Step-grandmother
Wife	Half-sister	Nephew in-law	Grandmother in-law
De facto marriage partner	Sister in-law	Niece	Grandfather
Mother	Brother	Step-niece	Step-grandfather
Step-mother	Step-brother	Niece in-law	Grandfather in-law
Mother in-law	Half brother	Cousin	Grand daughter
Father	Brother in-law	Step-cousin	Step-grand daughter
Step-father	Aunt	Cousin in-law	Grand daughter in-law
Father in-law	Step-aunt	Great uncle	Grandson
Son	Aunt in-law	Great aunt	Step-grandson
Step-son	Uncle	Great-nephew	Grandson in-law
Son in-law	Step-uncle	Great-niece	
Daughter	Uncle in-law		
Step-daughter			
Daughter in-law			

In addition to this list, any direct ancestors (such as great-grandmother) or direct descendants (such as great-grandchild) are considered to be family members. However, any person more distantly related than cousin is not considered a family member. Adopted and foster relationships are treated as related; godparent and godchild relationships are not treated as related.

Definition of dependent children and 'nominal child' rules

The ABS defines dependent children as comprising two groups: children aged under 15, and dependent students who must be full-time students aged between 15 and 24, and be a usual resident of the same dwelling as at least one of their parents.

Where a child under 15 is a usual resident of a dwelling where their parent is not a usual resident, the coding rules require the child be allocated a 'nominal parent', and in the process becomes a 'nominal child'. Any person who is allocated as a 'nominal parent' to a 'nominal child' is then coded as a parent and is indistinguishable from a birth, foster, step or adoptive parent. The concepts of the 'nominal parent' and 'nominal child' are used where, to all intents and purposes, a 'parent-child' relationship exists in a household. The aim is to allow coding of more consistent family and household structures.

Full-time students aged between 15 and 24 are never allocated nominal parents. Consequently if that student is a usual resident of a dwelling where their birth, step or adoptive parent is not a usual resident, the student cannot be defined as 'dependent' and becomes a related (or unrelated) person in that household.

A nominal parent is allocated to a nominal child by applying the following rules in the order shown below. The role of nominal parent is given to:

- The nominal child's eldest sibling who is over the age of 25.
- The nominal child's closest non-sibling relative aged 25 or more. If necessary, relationships by lineage (vertical) take precedence over other types of relationships, e.g. a grandmother over an aunt, or an aunt over a cousin.
- Persons in a couple relationship.
- A female in preference to a male, e.g. an aunt over an uncle.
- The eldest person usually resident in the dwelling.

The following examples illustrate the application of these rules. A child who usually lives with their uncle and aunt (who form a couple) and grandmother would be assigned to the grandmother (closest relative rule); a child usually resident with their aunt and an unrelated couple would be assigned to the aunt (closest relative rule); a child usually living with an unrelated couple and the sibling of the unrelated couple would be assigned to the couple (couple relationship rule); and a child usually resident with two or more relatives, e.g. an uncle and aunt who are siblings, would be assigned to the aunt (child to female parent rule). If the child resided with two uncles, he or she would be assigned to the eldest uncle (eldest person rule). Finally, a child usually resident in a dwelling with unrelated persons only would be assigned to the eldest female present or, failing that, to the eldest person.

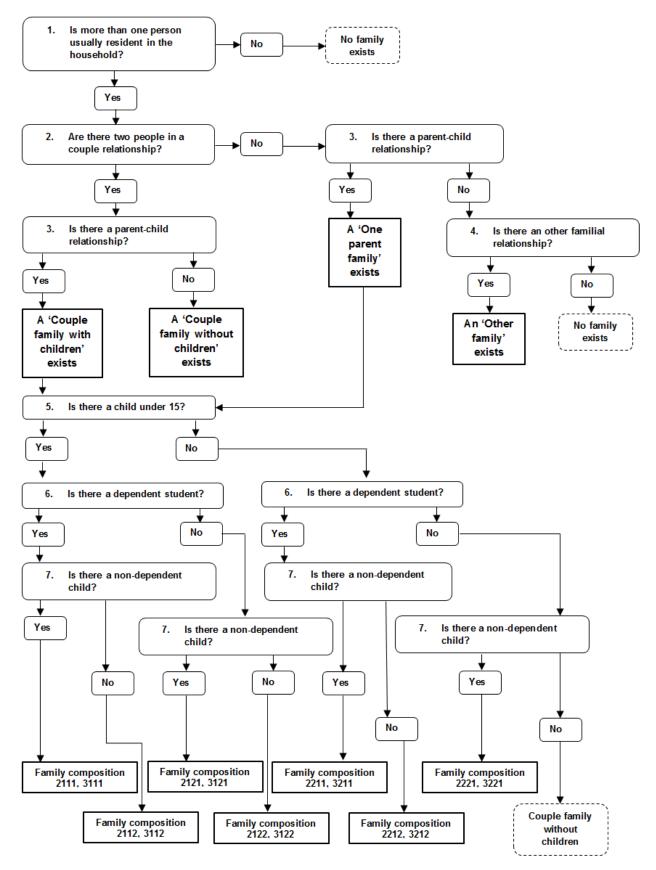
Description of coding

Families are coded to the 'Family composition' classification by applying a simple series of consecutive criteria, which are, in order of precedence:

- Presence of couple relationship.
- Presence of children under 15.

- Presence of dependent students.
- Presence of non-dependent children.

The presence or absence of each of these criteria leads to the allocation of the appropriate 'Family composition' code. The decision-making process is represented in the following flowchart:



A flowchart showing the decision making process of applying family composition codes. No family exists when there is no more than one person usually resident in the household; or when there is more than one person usually resident in the household,

there are not two people in a couple relationship, there is not a parent-child relationship, and there is not an other familial relationship. An 'Other family' exists when there is more than one person usually resident in the household, there are not two people in a couple relationship, there is not a parent-child relationship, and there is an other familial relationship. A 'One parent family' exists when there is more than one person usually resident in the household, there is not two people in a couple relationship, and there is a parent-child relationship. A 'Couple family without children' exists when there is more than one person usually resident in the household, there are two people in a couple relationship, and there is not a parent-child relationship. A 'Couple family with children' exists when there is more than one person usually resident in the household, there are two people in a couple relationship, and there is a parent-child relationship. Family composition codes 2111 and 3111 apply when a 'couple family with children' exists or a 'one parent family' exists and there is a child under 15, there is a dependent student, and there is a non-dependent child. Family composition codes 2112 and 3112 apply when a 'couple family with children' exists or a 'one parent family' exists and there is a child under 15, there is a dependent student, and there is not a nondependent child. Family composition codes 2121 and 3121 apply when a 'couple family with children exists or a 'one parent family' exists and there is a child under 15, there is not a dependent student, and there is a non-dependent child. Family composition codes 2122 and 3122 apply when a 'couple family with children' exists or a 'one parent family' exists and there is a child under 15, there is not a dependent student, and there is not a non-dependent student. Family composition codes 2211 and 3211 apply when a 'couple family with children' exists or a 'one parent family exists and there is not a child under 15, there is a dependent student, and there is a non-dependent child. Family composition codes 2212 and 3212 apply when a 'couple family with children' exists or a 'one parent family' exists, there is not a child under 15, there is a dependent student, and there is not a non-dependent child. Family composition codes 2221 and 3221 apply when a 'couple family with children' exists or a 'one parent family exists and there is not a child under 15, there is not a dependent student, and there is a non-dependent child. A couple family without children exists when a 'couple family with children' exists or a 'one parent family' exists, there is not a child under 15, there is not a dependent student, and there is not a non-dependent child.

Collection methods

Standard question module

The data used to derive the 'Family Composition' classification are those collected for the 'Relationship in household' standard. The recommended methodology and questionnaire modules are detailed in the 'Relationship in household' standard.

Standard input categories

The standard input categories for 'Family composition' replicate those at the four digit level of the 'Family composition' code structure (see the Classification and Coding page). For operational purposes, supplementary codes can be included. Where the people present cannot be deemed a family, for example when all of the individuals present are under 15 years old, the code '0002 Not classifiable' is used. In the Census, non-family/non-classifiable households are coded as Not Applicable '@@@@'.

Output

Standard output categories

The standard output categories for data on 'Family composition' replicate those of the 'Family composition' code structure (see the Classification and Coding page). The hierarchical structure of the classification allows the statistics to be output at the level of the classification best suited to their purpose. For example, output categories can be at the one, two, three or four digit level. Standard labels should be used to ensure comparability of published results and the following footnotes should be provided as applicable:

Output at level 1, i.e. 'Couple family with no children', 'Couple family with children', 'One parent family' or 'Other family', requires a footnote stating: The categories 'Couple family with children' and 'One parent family' may include children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children.

Output at level 2, e.g. 'Couple family with no children under 15', requires a footnote stating: The categories 'Couple family with children under 15', 'Couple family with no children under 15', 'One parent family with children under 15' and 'One parent family with no children under 15' may include dependent students and non-dependent children.

Output at level 3, e.g. 'Couple family with no children under 15 and with dependent students', requires a footnote stating: The categories 'Couple family with children under 15 and dependent students', 'Couple family with children under 15 and no dependent students', 'Couple family with no children under 15 and with dependent students', 'One parent family with children under 15 and no dependent students' and 'One parent family with no children under 15 and with dependent students' may include non-dependent children.

Output at level 4, e.g. 'Couple family with no children under 15, and with dependent students and non-dependent children', is the most detailed level and requires only the mandatory footnotes listed below.

Mandatory footnotes and other output information

Although all output stated above is standard, there are additional mandatory requirements for footnotes and glossary entries:

- There must be glossary definitions for every standard output label used.
- The categories 'With children under 15', 'With no children under 15 and with dependent students' and 'With non-dependent children only' are mutually exclusive; the category 'With children under 15' may or may not include the presence of dependent students and non-dependent children; similarly the category 'With no children under 15 and with dependent students' may or may not include non-dependent children. This must be stated in a footnote.
- Within all levels of the broad categories 'Couple family with no children', 'Couple family with children', and 'One parent family', other related individuals may be present in the family. This must be stated in a footnote.

Output categories and code structure for same-sex couples

Where information is required on the type of couple in a family, a code number called the 'type of couple identifier' can be applied as follows:

- 5 Opposite-sex couple
- 7 Same-sex male couple
- 8 Same-sex female couple

The type of couple identifier (whether a same-sex or opposite-sex couple) should be used only in conjunction with the level 1 categories (see below). However, if data quality permits, it may be applied at any level of the classification. The dissemination of data about opposite-sex and same-sex couples at more detailed levels will depend on the data quality and sample size of the collection.

The numbers 5, 7, and 8 can be added to the first, second, third or fourth digits of the 'Family composition' code to produce aggregate outputs which distinguish between same-sex and opposite-sex couples at the required level of the classification. For example, aggregate data making this distinction at the broadest level can be produced using the following codes:

1	Couple family with no children			
	15	Opposite-sex couple with no children		
	17	Same-sex male couple with no children		
	18	Same-sex female couple with no children		
2	Couple family with children			
	25	Opposite-sex couple with children		
	27	Same-sex male couple with children		
	28	Same-sex female couple with children		
3	One parent family			
9	Other family			

The following statement is a mandatory footnote for the same-sex couple output classification:

Within all levels of the broad categories 'Couple family with no children', 'Couple family with children', and 'One parent family', other related individuals may be present in the family.

Cross-classified output structure: family composition of household

Many users are interested in an output structure that focuses on particular aspects of the data collected. In such cases, combining the output of the 'Family composition' variable with that of the 'Household composition' variable will be most useful. For example, they may be interested in the presence of absence of dependent children within the family (from 'Family composition') and whether people other than just these parents and their dependent children are also present in the household (from 'Household composition'). Such other people are non-dependent children, other related individuals in the family, or non-family members in the household.

Published output uses either detailed or short output structures and both should be labelled 'Family composition of household'. The same title is applied to both structures because the short structure is an aggregation of some categories of the detailed structure and is thus fully compatible.

For details of the cross-classified output structure 'Family composition of household' refer to the 'Household composition' variable.

Supporting variables

'Family composition' requires the supporting variables 'Relationship in household' and 'Age'.

Measurement issues

Be careful when drawing conclusions about what is included in the various output categories. The 'Family composition' classification is relatively small and attempts to categorise a wide range of families into single categories. For example, the level 1 group can be misleading in relation to the category of one-parent families. This category includes the traditional notion of a lone parent with young children as well as a mature person living with an aged parent.

Related classifications

The 'Family composition' classification is closely connected with several other classifications. These include:

- 'Relationship in household'.
- · 'Household composition'.
- · 'Registered marital status'.
- 'Social marital status'.
- 'Income unit composition'.

Appendix A - Correspondence tables between the family type classification and the family composition classification

The 'Family composition' standard replaced the 'Family type' standard in 2005 and the categories are fully compatible. The following tables show correspondences between the two.

Note that there is no correspondence listed between 'Family composition' and the four-digit level of 'Family type'. This is because 'Family composition' does not differentiate families according to the criteria for the four-digit level of 'Family type', which is the presence or absence of 'other related individuals'.

Table 1: 'Family type' to 'Family composition'

Family type code	Family composition code	
1	2	
11	212	
111	2121	
112	2122	
12	221	
121	2211	
122	2212	
13	211	
131	2111	
132	2112	
14	222, 2221	
141	222, 2221	
2	1, 12, 122, 1222	
24	1, 12, 122, 1222	
242	1, 12, 122, 1222	
3	3	
31	312	
311	3121	
312	3122	
32	321	
321	3211	
322	3212	
33	311	
331	3111	
332	3112	
34	3221	
341	3221	
9	9, 92, 922, 9222	
94	9, 92, 922, 9222	
942	9, 92, 922, 9222	

Note 1: in cases where multiple codes are listed under 'Family composition', it is not necessary to specify at which level of the classification the correspondence is made, as all levels of those listed categories are identical in content.

Table 2. 'Family composition' to 'Family type'

1 2, 24, 242 12 2, 24, 242 122 2, 24, 242	
122 2, 24, 242	
1222 2, 24, 242	
2 1	
21 11, 13*	
211 13	
2111 131	
2112 132	
212 11	
2121 111	
2122 112	
22 12, 14*	
221 12	
2211 121	
2212 122	
222 14, 141	
2221 14, 141	
3	
31, 33*	
311 33	
3111 331	
3112 332	
312 312	
3121 311	
3122 312	
32 32, 34*	
321 32	
3211 321	
3212 322	
322 34, 341	
3221 34, 341	
9 9,94,942	
92 9, 94, 942	
922 9, 94, 942	
9222 9, 94, 942	

Note 1: in cases marked with an asterisk, it is possible to code data categorised to the 'Family composition' classification to either of the listed 'Family type' categories as the information is insufficient to select between the 'Family type' categories.

Note 2: in other cases where multiple codes are listed under 'Family type' it is not necessary to specify at which level of the classification the correspondence is made, as all levels of those listed categories are identical in content.

Household composition

Broadly speaking, 'Household composition' is classified according to the number and composition of families within households. Therefore, in order to determine 'Household composition' the relationship of household members to each other and the existence or absence of familial relationships must be considered. This is established through the use of the 'Relationship in household' and then the 'Family composition' variables.

Terminology used in this standard is defined in the Glossary.

Introduction

Introduction to the standard

The concept of household is fundamental in the production of social and labour statistics. The household is one of the basic units of social analysis and is the basis for data collection in many statistical collections. In the ABS, many social, labour and demographic surveys are household-based, including the Census of Population and Housing and the Labour Force Survey. The ABS 'Household composition' variable classifies households by the number of families or other people usually resident within them.

In its broadest sense a household is a group of people who live together as a single unit within a dwelling. Together with the family, it is one of the basic groups of social aggregation. Households and families are closely connected to each other and, although each concept is defined in different terms, in practice they often refer to the same set of people when applied to a particular dwelling. Information on households provides input to Australian household-based estimates. It also identifies various

groups within the population, such as multiple family households or the number of people living alone. 'Household composition' can also be cross-classified with other variables, e.g. 'Total cash income'.

Underlying concepts

Name of variable

The name of the variable is 'Household composition'.

The primary factor determining 'Household composition' is whether a family is present or not and whether or not other unrelated household members are present. For statistical purposes, family is defined as two or more people, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, and who are usually resident in the same household. The basis of a family is formed by identifying the presence of a couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship or other blood relationship. Some households will therefore contain more than one family.

'Household composition' replaced the ABS Standard Variable 'Household type' in 2005. The title 'Household type' has been used to describe this variable in the Census of Population and Housing since 1986, the 1992 Survey of Families in Australia and the Monthly Population Survey (MPS). The title 'Family Composition of Household' has been used in the Household Expenditure Survey (HES). Prior to the introduction of the 'Household type' standard in 1992, the MPS used a non-standard list of family and household types labelled as 'Household Type'.

Definition of variable

Normal definition

The concept of 'Household' is nominally defined as:

• One or more persons usually resident in the same private dwelling.

The System of National Accounts (SNA) definition is: 'a small group of persons who share the same living accommodation, who pool some, or all, of their income and wealth and who consume certain types of goods and services collectively, mainly housing and food.' The ABS definition varies from that of the SNA only in specifically allowing lone person households, and in removing any reference to consumption.

The variable 'Household composition' is defined as:

• The differentiation of households on the basis of the number of families present, and whether or not unrelated household members are present (if it is a family household), or the number of household members (if it is a non-family household).

The variable 'Household composition' is an attribute of the statistical unit 'household'. Indirectly it is also an attribute of the 'person' for all persons who are members of households.

Operational definition

The 'Household' is operationally defined as:

• One or more persons, at least one of whom is at least 15 years of age, usually resident in the same private dwelling.

The ABS does not seek to differentiate multi-household dwellings from single-household dwellings; the number of households in a private dwelling is always regarded as one.

Having established the relationship of all usual residents of the household to one another, and identified all families and other unrelated household members (if any) within the household, the operationalisation of 'Household composition' is summarised as follows:

• Households are allocated to categories of the 'Household composition' classification on the basis of the number of families identified in the household, whether unrelated household members are present in a family household and whether the number of household members is greater than one in a non-family household.

The identification of usual residents is essential to determine 'Household composition' because the 'Relationship in household' data on which family and household coding rely only applies to usual residents.

For those cases where visitors are within scope of the collection, households consisting of visitors only are coded to Supplementary category '02 Visitor only household'.

Household member relationships and family identification are carried out using the 'Relationship in household' and 'Family composition' classifications. For further details see the standards for those variables

Scope of the variable

The variable 'Household composition' applies to all households in private dwellings

Discussion of conceptual issues

The variable 'Household composition' aims to analyse the counting unit 'household', just as the variable 'Family composition' is used in analysing the counting unit 'family' and the variable 'Income unit composition' is used to group persons within households who pool income in social and labour statistical collections. The income unit, the family and the household describe concepts which are very closely related in practice. Even though they are fundamentally different ideas, when applied to a particular dwelling they will all often refer to the same set of people. This is because the family is defined as a subset of the household and many Australian households comprise only a single family and a single income unit.

The 'Household composition' classification does not distinguish between multifamily households where the families are related to each other (e.g. where siblings each with dependent children share a dwelling), and multifamily households where the families are not related to each other. If this distinction is required, it should be derived as the separate variable 'Relationship between families' using 'Relationship in household' data. See the 'Relationship between families' standard for more information. The 'Household composition' classification does not distinguish between income units.

The 'Household composition' concept is confined to private dwellings. In some surveys, a multi-stage area sample of dwellings separately identifies two categories of dwellings: private dwellings (houses, flats, etc.) and non-private dwellings (or 'Special dwellings') which include units such as hotels and motels. Persons living in non-private dwellings such as hospitals, prisons, homes for the aged, etc. are outside the scope of the classification.

Hotels, motels and serviced apartments may be thought to contain potential households, but the ABS excludes people in non-private dwellings from family coding due to operational constraints imposed by the nature of collection methodologies. Similarly in the case of the Census, household data are not collected from persons residing in non-private dwellings, either temporarily or for longer periods of time. Instead, each individual is administered a personal questionnaire. Consequently the Census does not identify households in non-private dwellings either. It should be noted that over time the types of dwellings categorised as private dwellings have expanded to include some retirement villages, caravans etc, effectively broadening the scope of dwellings considered private dwellings.

Classification and coding

The classification criteria

The criteria used to structure the 'Household composition' classification are:

- The presence or absence of families in a household.
- The number of families in a family household.
- The presence of non-family members.
- Whether there is more than one household member in a non-family household.

The standard classification and code structure

The standard 'Household composition' classification comprises the following categories:

1	On	e family	household		
	11	One fa	mily household with only family members present		
	12	One fa	mily household with non-family members present		
2	Multiple family household				
	21	Two fa	mily household		
		211	Two family household with only family members present		
		212	Two family household with non-family members present		
	22	Three	or more family household		
		221	Three or more family household with only family members present		
		222	Three or more family household with non-family members present		
3	No	n-family	household		
	31	Lone p	erson household		
	32	Group	household		

Supplementary codes

The 'Household composition' classification contains three supplementary codes:

- '1 Not stated/inadequately described'.
- '2 Visitor only household'.
- '3 Other not classifiable'.

The first code is used to code responses which do not provide sufficient information to be coded to any level of the structure or when no information is given. The second is used when all of the individuals present are visitors and such households fall within the scope of a particular collection. The third category is used to process responses which are not within the scope of the classification, for example when all of the individuals present are under 15 years old.

Scope of the classification

The 'Household composition' classification is designed to classify all households within all private dwellings in Australia. Household data are not sought from persons usually resident in non-private dwellings, which are out of scope of the classification (see the 'Discussion of conceptual issues' section on the 'Underlying Concepts' page for further information).

Operationally, any dwelling where all members are aged under 15 years is out of scope of the classification and therefore coded to '03 Other not classifiable'. This approach is consistent with that used in the 'Family composition' classification.

Although 'Household composition' is an attribute of the counting unit Household, where output requires, families and persons may be classified by the 'Household composition' of their household.

Application of the classification to other variables

The 'Household composition' classification should only be applied to the variable 'Household composition'.

Coding procedures

The standard classification and codes for 'Household composition' are derived from 'Relationship in household' and 'Family composition' data. Responses to the 'Household composition' variable are stored as codes of the classification.

Collection methods

Standard question module

The data used to form the input to the 'Household composition' classification are derived from those collected to derive the 'Relationship in household' and 'Family composition' variables. The recommended methodology and questionnaire modules are explained in the 'Relationship in household' standard.

Standard input categories

The derivation of the input categories can be summarised as follows:

The relationship of all household members to one another is established. Then all families and other unrelated household members (if any) within the household are identified. 'Household composition' is then allocated on the basis of the number of

families and whether unrelated household members are present (if it is a family household) or the number of household members if it is a non-family household.

The original answers to the questionnaire module must therefore be processed to produce the following input to the 'Household composition' classification:

- the presence or absence of families in a household
- the number of families present in a family household, and
- whether unrelated persons are present in a family household, or
- whether there is more than one person present in a non-family household.

This information can be taken directly from that already processed to obtain 'Relationship In household' and 'Family composition'.

Output

Standard output categories

To represent the full range of household structures in statistical output, it is anticipated that most users and producers of household statistics will present data using the full classification structure. If output is to be presented in a nested or hierarchical manner, then the standard output labels are:

One family household
One family household with only family members present
One family household with non-family members present
Multiple family household
Two family household
Two family household with only family members present
Two family household with non-family members present
Three or more family household
Three or more family household with only family members present
Three or more family household with non-family members present
Non-family household
Lone person household
Group household
Not classifiable
Visitor only dwelling
Other not classifiable
Not stated/Inadequately described

If output is to be presented at one level only there are several options of standard output labels depending on the output purposes and requirements.

Simplest option:	Expanding the family and non-family households:
Family households	One family households
Non-family households	Multiple family households
Not classifiable	Lone person households
Not stated/Inadequately described	Group households
	Not classifiable
	Not stated/Inadequately described
Expanding the non-family households:	Expanding one family and multiple family households:
Family households	One family households
Lone person households	Two family households
Group households	Three or more family households
Not classifiable	Non-family households
Not stated/Inadequately described	Not classifiable
	Not stated/Inadequately described
Expanding the family households:	Most detailed option:
One family households	One family households
Multiple family households	Two family households
Non-family households	Three or more family households
Not classifiable	Lone person households
Not stated/Inadequately described	Group households
	Not classifiable
	Not stated/Inadequately described

Cross-classified output structure: Family composition of household

Many users are interested in an output structure that focuses on particular aspects of the data collected. In such cases, combining the output of the 'Family composition' variable with that of the 'Household composition' variable will be most useful. For example, they may be interested in the presence of absence of dependent children within the family (from 'Family composition') and whether people other than just these parents and their dependent children are also present in the household (from 'Household composition'). Such other people are non-dependent children, other related individuals in the family, or non-family members in the household.

Published output uses either detailed or short output structures and both should be labelled 'Family composition of household'. The same title is applied to both structures because the short structure is an aggregation of some categories of the detailed structure and is thus fully compatible.

Detailed output structure

The first (and more detailed) recommended standard cross-classified output structure follows. This output structure has mandatory explanatory requirements in the form of footnotes or glossary entries which are detailed in the 'Summary information' section below.

One family households	
Couple family with dependent cl	hildren
	Couple family with dependent children only
	Couple family with dependent children and other persons
One parent family with depende	nt children
	One parent family with dependent children only
	One parent family with dependent children and other persons
Couple only	
Other one family households	
Multiple family households	
Multiple family households with	dependent children
Multiple family households with	no dependent children
Non-family households	
Lone person	
Group household	

If required, the output can feature two extra subtotals:

- Total households with dependent children.
- Total households with no dependent children.

The categories of the detailed output structure provided above may be aggregated in a variety of ways in order to best fulfil user requirements. For example separate information on Lone persons and Group households may not be required, in which

case output could be published at the Non-family household level. However, in the interests of comparability across collections a shorter aggregated version of the structure is explained below and is recommended for use where possible.

The detailed information required to construct this output tabulation is too lengthy for inclusion as footnotes to the table. This information is specified below under the heading 'Detailed description of table categories'. The summary information below outlines the information contained in the detailed description to aid interpretation of the table: it should be included as footnotes, in a glossary or as explanatory material to any published output.

Summary information

Summary information aids interpretation of the output table and should be included as footnotes, in a glossary or as explanatory material to any published output. The information required is:

- a. The expression 'Other persons' refers to non-dependent children, other related individuals, and non-family members in the household.
- b. The categories 'Couple family with dependent children only', 'One parent family with dependent children only' and 'Couple only' do not contain any non-dependent children, any related individuals, or any non-family members in the household.
- c. The category 'Other one family households' comprises the 'Family composition' categories 'Other family' and 'One parent family with no children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children'.

Detailed description of table categories

The following information defines the exact content of each category in the detailed output structure above:

- a. Dependent children are children aged under 15 years, and dependent students (i.e. full-time students aged 15-24 years).
- b. The expression 'Other persons' refers to non-dependent children, other related individuals, and non-family members in the household.
- c. 'Other related individuals' are persons who report one of the following 'Relationship in household' to the Family reference person:
- 61 Brother/sister
- 62 Father/mother
- 63 Non-dependent grandchild
- 64 Grandfather/grandmother
- 65 Cousin
- 66 Uncle/aunt
- 67 Nephew/niece
- 69 Other related individual not elsewhere classified

They are identified by cross-classification of the family with 'Relationship in household' data.

- d. The categories 'Couple family with dependent children only', 'One parent family with dependent children only' and 'Couple only' do not contain any non-dependent children, any related individuals, or any non-family members in the household.
- e. The category 'Couple family with dependent children only' comprises the following 'Family composition' categories, where the 'Household composition' category is '11 One family household with only family members present', and no 'other related individuals' are present:
- 2112 Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 2122 Couple family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 2212 Couple family with no children under 15, and with dependent students and no non-dependent children
- f. The category 'Couple family with dependent children and other persons' includes the following 'Family composition' categories:
- 2111 Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children
- 2121 Couple family with children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children
- 2211 Couple family with no children under 15, and with dependent students and non-dependent children

It also includes the following 'Family composition' categories where the 'Household composition' category is '12 One family household with non-family members present', or when 'other related individuals' are present:

- 2112 Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 2122 Couple family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 2212 Couple family with no children under 15, with dependent students and no non-dependent children
- g. The category 'One parent family with dependent children only' comprises the following 'Family composition' categories, where the 'Household composition' category is '11 One family household with only family members present', and no 'other related individuals' are present:
- 3112 One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 3122 One parent family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 3212 One parent family with no children under 15, with dependent students and no non-dependent children
- h. The category 'One parent family with dependent children and other persons' includes the following 'Family composition' categories:
- 3111 One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children
- 3121 One parent family with children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children
- 3211 One parent family with no children under 15, and with dependent students and non-dependent children

It also includes the following 'Family composition' categories where the 'Household composition' category is '12 One family household with non-family members present', or when 'other related individuals' are present:

- 3112 One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 3122 One parent family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 3212 One parent family with no children under 15, with dependent students and no non-dependent children
- i. The category 'Couple only' comprises the 'Family composition' category '1222 Couple family with no children', where the 'Household composition' category is '11 One family household with only family members present', and no 'other related individuals' are present.
- j. The category 'Other one family households' comprises the 'Family composition' category '1222 Couple family with no children', where the 'Household composition' category is '12 One family household with non-family members present'; and the 'Family composition' categories '2221 Couple family with no children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children'; '3221 One parent family with no children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children'; and '9222 Other family'.

Short structure

The second (and more concise) standard output structure is shown below. It represents an aggregated version of the detailed structure above and is fully compatible with it. Any table produced using this structure has mandatory explanatory requirements in the form of footnotes or glossary entries which must be listed beneath the resulting table.

One family households Couple family with dependent children One parent family with dependent children Couple only Other one family households Multiple family households

Non-family households

Lone person Group household

The footnotes or information required are:

- a. The categories 'Couple family with dependent children' and 'One parent family with dependent children' may contain non-dependent children, other related persons and non-related persons.
- b. The category 'Other one family households' comprises the 'Family composition' categories 'Other family', 'One parent family with no children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children', and 'Couple family with no children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children'.

Supporting variables

The variable 'Household composition' is primarily used as a stand-alone variable but can be used in conjunction with many other variables to increase the explanatory power of the classification. 'Relationship in household' and 'Family composition' are required in order to determine 'Household composition'.

Measurement issues

Over time the types of dwellings considered as private dwellings have expanded to include caravan parks and some retirement villages. Therefore while the actual scope of the 'Household composition' variable remains the same, the population of persons considered to be within that scope has expanded to enable such households to be enumerated. No other specific measurement issues apply to the variable 'Household composition' beyond the normal constraints affecting statistical collections, such as problems with confidentiality or standard errors which may not permit the output of data for some of the categories at the more detailed levels of the classification.

Related classifications

The 'Household composition' classification is closely linked to the following classifications:

- 'Family composition'.
- 'Relationship In household'.
- · 'Income unit composition'.
- 'Social marital status'.

Changes to any of these classifications cannot be considered in isolation and all possible ramifications concerning the other classifications must be investigated before adopting the change.

Relationship between families

The 'Relationship between families' variable describes the nature of the relationship between multiple families within a household and thereby facilitates the analysis of data related to extended family networks. This can provide insight into the complexity of family life and shed light on areas of community need or the potential for policy development. The variable does not provide information on extended family networks beyond the household.

Terminology used in this standard is defined in the Glossary.

Introduction

Introduction to the standard

The identification of extended family networks within multi-family households is of interest to many users of social statistics. The 'Relationship between families' variable, along with the 'Lone ancestor' indicator, can be used to identify the presence of 'extended families' in Australian families. In ordinary usage 'extended family' indicates a family comprising not only parents and children but also other members of the immediate family.

Data about the type of extended family within a household is gathered through the 'Relationship in household' questions. Of particular relevance to the 'Relationship between families' variable is the allocation of household and family reference persons. Relationships within families are assigned through the initial identification of a family reference person around whom the family is constructed. The familial or non-familial relationship which exists between families is established by examining the relationship between the reference persons of each family. For example, the reference person in the second family could be the son or daughter of the reference person of the 'Primary family'.

Another variable required to determine relationships between families is the 'Family number'. In multi-family households the families present are identified by allocating a different family number to each separate family.

Underlying concepts

Name of variable

The name of the variable is 'Relationship of non-primary family to primary family'. The standard abbreviated name is 'Relationship between families'.

The Census of Population and Housing provides output about such relationships and currently identifies up to three families in a household. In the 2011 Census the 'Relationship Between Families (RFLF)' variable was a family level variable that classified the relationship between the primary family and the second or third family enumerated in the same household. To identify the second and third families, the variable Family Number (FNOF) was required.

Definition of variable

Nominal definition

The relationship between families within a household is the relationship (familial or non-familial) of the second and any subsequent families to the primary family.

Operational definition

The relationship between families is measured by determining the relationship between the family reference person in a non-primary family to the family reference person in the primary family. The family reference person is determined by taking one person and then describing each other person's relationship to that person (see 'Discussion of conceptual issues' below). This allows the relationship between other members of the household to be identified and described.

The relationship is established by:

- a. Identifying the families which exist in a household.
- b. Identifying the family reference person in each family.
- c. Identifying the family relationships of the second, third or subsequent family reference persons to the primary family reference person.
- d. The relationship established by (c) then becomes the relationship of family 2, 3 or subsequent families to the primary family.

Relationship between families is an attribute of the counting unit 'family'.

NOTE: The number of families in a household is identified through the operationalisation of 'Family number', (see Glossary) which is a single-digit code assigned to each person to indicate to which family that person belongs.

Discussion of conceptual issues

The coding of a household member's relationship is based on the household relationship data collected in the 'Relationship in household' questions (see 'Relationship in household - Collection Methods'). The data, as originally collected, are dependent upon whom the respondent nominates as the household reference person. To achieve good quality data about family relationships, a standard is applied to ensure the accurate identification of the household or family reference person. If a respondent has nominated the wrong person, the correct person can be chosen by applying the standard hierarchical criteria as follows:

- one of the partners in a registered or de facto marriage, or
- a lone parent, or
- the person with the highest income, or

- the owner, purchaser or primary rent payer of the household accommodation, or
- the eldest person.

Allocation of relationship codes in multi-family households is complex. Relationships in a household must be allocated on a family basis for each member of a family within the household. To facilitate this process, each family is separately identified by assigning a unique family number to each of its members. The 'Relationship in household' classification is then applied separately to each family in the household in turn (see the 'Relationship in household' standard and the Glossary).

Because the selection of household and family reference persons determine the relationships described, the types of relationships between families can be somewhat arbitrary depending on whom is selected. For example, in a household consisting of two cousins, their husbands and children, the category could either be 'Other related family' or 'Unrelated family' depending on whether the cousins or husbands are selected as the household reference person. The use of standard methods for selecting reference persons will alleviate (but not entirely solve) this problem (see Appendix A of the 'Relationship in household' standard).

The Census is the only collection which to date has published 'Relationship between families' data.

Classification and coding

The classification criteria

The criteria used to classify the relationship between families are:

- whether the family is present in a multi-family household, and
- the type of relationship that one family reference person has to the family reference person of the primary family. The types of relationships that can be separately identified are immediate family, either vertically extended (parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren) or horizontally extended (brothers, sisters). More distant family members (e.g. aunt, uncle, cousin) will be grouped together into an 'Other related family'. If the family reference persons are not related to each other the relationship will be recorded as 'Unrelated family'.

The types of relationships that can be regarded as family relationships are described in 'Relationship in Household - Classification and Coding'.

The standard classification and code structure

The standard classification and code structure for 'Relationship between families' is:

1	Mother's/father's family
2	Grandparent's family
3	Son's/daughter's family
4	Grandchild's family
5	Brother's/sister's family
6	Other related family
7	Unrelated family

Scope of the variable

This classification is only applicable to non-primary families in multi-family households.

Application of the classification to other variables

'Relationship between families' is not applicable to any other variables.

Collection methods

Standard question module

The standard question module for this variable is the 'Relationship in household' question module (see 'Relationship in Household - Collection Methods').

Standard input categories

The input categories are derived after:

• each family in a multi-family household has been identified separately

- the family reference person for each family is identified
- the primary family is identified
- the family relationship between the reference person of the primary family and every other family is established.

The standard input categories for 'Relationship between families' are the same as for its standard classification and code structure (see the Classification and Coding page).

Mother's/father's family		
Grandparent's family		
Son's/daughter's family		
Grandchild's family		
Brother's/sister's family		
Other related family		
Unrelated family		

Output

Standard output categories

The standard output categories are the same as the standard input categories:

Mother's/father's family			
Grandparent's family			
Son's/daughter's family			
Grandchild's family			
Brother's/sister's family			
Other related family			
Unrelated family			

Supporting variables

The following variables must be used to derive 'Relationship between families': 'Household/Family reference person', 'Relationship in household', and 'Family number'.

Related classifications

This variable is closely linked to the 'Relationship in household', 'Family number' and 'Household/Family reference person' classifications therefore any changes to these may have consequences for this standard.

Social marital status

The 'Social marital status' standard variable reflects the living arrangements of couples.

Terminology used in this standard is defined in the Glossary.

Introduction

Introduction to the standard

At the broad level, 'Social marital status' is derived from 'Relationship in household' data; detailed 'Social marital status' requires the collection of broad 'Registered marital status' data as well.

The related variable 'Registered marital status' establishes the legal status of marriage arrangements in Australia. As the two concepts measure different personal characteristics and serve different purposes they are treated as separate standards with their own classifications. They can be used independently or together depending on the purposes of the analysis.

The ABS therefore recommends that 'Social marital status' is always derived when information on living arrangements is sought, whereas 'Registered marital status' need be output only where it is required specifically for the purposes of the collection.

Underlying concepts

Name of variable

The name of the variable is 'Social marital status'.

Several other alternative terminologies, including 'marital partnership', 'consensual union', 'consensual marital status', 'cohabitation status', 'partnership status', 'whether partnered', 'whether living with a partner', or 'de facto marital status', are not considered as appropriate as the term 'Social marital status' to describe the concept. Similarly, the alternative term 'living arrangements' is confusing as it can also be related to wider household relationships (e.g. whether the respondent lives alone or with others).

Definition of variable

The variable 'Social marital status' is defined as:

• a person's relationship status in terms of whether he or she forms a couple relationship with another person who is usually resident in the household.

A couple relationship is based on a consensual union and is defined as two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. This relationship is either a registered marriage or de facto marriage.

According to this concept, a marriage exists when two people live together as a couple, regardless of whether the union is formalised through registration. Individuals are therefore regarded as 'married' if they are in a de facto relationship with a partner, or if they are living with their registered marriage partner.

'Social marital status' is an attribute of the counting unit 'person'.

Operational definition

Operationally, 'Social marital status' is defined as a person's relationship status in terms of whether he or she forms a couple relationship with another person living in the same usual residence, and the nature of that relationship. It is obtained by derivation from the responses to questions in the 'Relationship in household' standard. Derivation of detailed 'Social marital status' requires the collection of broad 'Registered marital status' data as well.

It is not always practical to ask questions which will determine whether the bonding usually associated with marriage exists between two people in statistical collections. Accordingly, a social marriage is deemed to exist when:

• a registered marriage, de facto marriage or couple relationship (either opposite-sex or same-sex) is reported in response to a question about relationships within the household.

and

• when the two individuals concerned are usually resident in the same household.

The definition of 'Social marital status' involves usual residence because it is necessary operationally to consider only relationships between people who usually reside in the same household. The distinction between visitors and usual residents ensures that partnerships are identified only between people who are usually resident in the same household.

Scope of the variable

The variable 'Social marital status' applies to all people aged 15 years and over.

Supporting variables

'Social marital status' requires the supporting variable 'Relationship in household'. Derivation of 'Social marital status' at detailed levels of the classification requires the supporting variable 'Registered marital status'.

Classification and coding

The classification criteria

Three classification criteria are used to form the categories of the classification:

- whether a person is living with a partner in a couple relationship
- whether a person is living with a partner in a registered marriage, and
- whether a person in a couple relationship is living with a person of the same sex.

People who live in such unions are classified as 'married'.

At the more detailed level, those people who are defined as 'married' are further classified according to whether their relationship to their partner is through a registered marriage or through a de facto marriage.

Application of the criteria

These criteria are applied to each person's couple relationship status to produce the major categories of the 'Social marital status' classification as defined below:

Married:

a person who is living with another person in a couple relationship. This relationship is either a registered marriage, or a de facto marriage.

Not married:

a person who is not living with another person in a couple relationship. This includes persons who live alone, or with other family members, and those in shared accommodation; it also includes persons who are in a registered marriage or in a de facto marriage, but whose partners are not usually resident in the household.

Married in a registered marriage:

a person who lives with another person in a couple relationship and this relationship is a registered marriage.

In practice, a person is classified as being a partner in a registered marriage if their relationship to a person, who usually lives in the same household, is reported as husband, wife or spouse and the 'Registered marital status' of both partners (if also asked in the collection) is reported as registered married.

Married in a de facto marriage:

a person who lives with another person in a couple relationship and this relationship is not a registered marriage.

In practice, a de facto marriage exists between an opposite-sex couple when the two people are usual residents in the same household and their relationship is reported as: partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover, boyfriend, girlfriend or when their relationship is reported as husband, wife or spouse and the 'Registered marital status' of one or both partners (if also asked in the collection) is reported as a category other than married.

A de facto marriage exists between a same-sex couple when the two people are usual residents in the same household and their relationship is reported as husband, wife, spouse, partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover or boyfriend. The term girlfriend should not be used as an indication of a de facto marriage between two women who are usual residents in the same household.

Traditional marriages - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

The ABS recommends that partners in traditional marriages involving Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people should be coded as 'Married in a registered marriage' even though such marriages cannot be registered under the Commonwealth Marriage Act 1961. This should not be a significant statistical issue for most collections.

The standard classification

The 'Social marital status' classification is a four level hierarchical structure. The one digit level is referred to as the broad level; the second level (two digit) as the detailed level; and the subsequent third and fourth levels are referred to as further disaggregations of the detailed level. The classification is as follows:

1	Married				
	10	Married (not further	ried (not further defined)		
	11	Married in a register	rried in a registered marriage		
	12	Married in a de facto	o marriage		
		15	Married in a de facto marriage, opposite sex couple		
		16	Married in a de facto marriage, same-sex couple		
			17 Married in a de facto marriage, male same-sex couple		
			18 Married in a de facto marriage, female same-sex couple		
2	Not married				
	21	Not married			

The code structure

This classification uses a two-digit code rather than a four-digit code, which would usually be used in a four level hierarchical classification structure. Using a two-digit code reduces storage and processing costs. The code structure also allows consistency in the coding of de facto couples (using the digits 5, 6, 7 and 8) with the 'Relationship in household' classification.

Residual categories and codes

Not applicable.

Supplementary codes

The following supplementary codes are used to code non-responses:

9 Not stated

98 Not stated

Scope of the classification

The 'Social marital status' classification applies to all people aged 15 years and over.

Application of the classification to other variables

The concept of 'Social marital status' is fundamental to the identification of couples and families. It is therefore an essential component of the 'Relationship in household', 'Family composition', 'Income unit composition' and 'Household composition' variables.

Coding procedures

The ABS applies the classification criteria listed above to 'Relationship in household' data using either a selection process within a computer assisted coding instrument for household surveys, or the Census of Population and Housing processing system.

Collection methods

Standard question module

The methodology for collecting 'Social marital status' varies according to the type of collection and the level of detail required. In household surveys, broad 'Social marital status' is always derived from information collected on the household form.

Where more detailed information is required, a computer-assisted interviewing (CAI) module is activated. This contains an integrated question set which allows further levels of detail to be ascertained and also collects data on 'Registered marital status'. This integrated method can be used as either an element of the CAI package or in the self-completed format presented below.

Interviewer-based collections

Deriving 'Social marital status' from 'Relationship in household'

Broad 'Social marital status' is always the first level of this variable to be derived from the 'Relationship in household' variable. The derivation of detailed 'Social marital status' requires the collection of broad 'Registered marital status' as well. Details of the type of de facto marriage present may be obtained by asking additional questions.

The codes and categories of 'Relationship in household' that are required to derive 'Social marital status' are:

1	Husband, wife or partner
	11 In a registered marriage
	12 In a de facto marriage
	15 In a de facto marriage, opposite-sex couple
	16 In a de facto marriage, same-sex couple
	17 In a de facto marriage, male same-sex couple
	18 In a de facto marriage, female same-sex couple
2	Lone parent
3	Child under 15
4	Dependent student (aged 15-24 and studying full-time)
5	Non-dependent child
6	Other related individual
7	Non-family member
91	Visitor

The following points should be noted:

- The scope of the 'Social marital status' variable does not include people under the age of 15 years.
- The operational definition of 'Social marital status' confines marriages within households. If a married couple are not usually resident together they are considered to be 'Not married' in the 'Social marital status' classification but they would be considered 'Married' in the 'Registered marital status' classification providing they are not separated from each other. People who are not usual residents are classified as a 'Visitor' in the 'Relationship in household' classification and are out of scope of the 'Social marital status' classification. Footnotes should be added to any output to explain the details of the 'Social marital status' classification (e.g. 'The category 'not married' includes people who are not currently living with their registered marriage spouse or with a de facto partner': see the 'Output' section).
- People in this category are coded to 'Married' in the broad 'Social marital status' classification and to 'Married in a
 registered marriage' in the detailed 'Social marital status' classification. people classified as 'Husband, wife, or partner in a
 de facto marriage' in the 'Relationship in household' classification are coded to 'Married' in the broad 'Social marital status'
 classification and to 'Married in a de facto marriage' in the detailed 'Social marital status' classification. Codes 15-18 in the
 'Relationship in household' classification can be used to further disaggregate data according to whether the couples are of
 the same or opposite sex (see Table 1).
- People classified as 'Lone parent', 'Dependant student (aged 15-24 and studying full-time)', 'Non-dependant child', 'Other related individual' and 'Non-family member' are coded to 'Not married'.

'Social marital status' and 'Registered marital status' are reported from interviewer based household surveys using the three stage method outlined below. These stages are usually performed in the ABS using the CAI instrument.

Broad 'Relationship in household' data are used to identify usual residents of a household who are aged 15 years or older. In particular, the data are used to identify people who are in a couple relationship with another member of the household. A series of marital status questions is then used to distinguish between registered and de facto marriages and to identify the 'Registered marital status' of people who are in scope.

Stage 1 - Deriving broad 'Social marital status'

In household-based collections, the broad 'Social marital status' of each household member is derived primarily from 'Relationship in household' information. 'Age' and 'Usual residency' data are also required as parties to 'Social marital status' must be aged 15 years or over and be usual residents of the same dwelling.

A 'Social marital status' of 'Married' exists when the relationship between two people aged 15 years and over and usually resident in the same household is reported as: husband, wife, spouse, partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover, boyfriend or girlfriend. Responses of 'Child under 15' and 'Visitor' indicate people who are out of scope of this variable. All other responses are coded as 'Not married'.

This derivation will result in broad 'Social marital status' classifications of:

1	Married
2	Not married

Stage 2 - Deriving detailed 'Social marital status'

To derive detailed 'Social marital status', part of the 'Registered marital status' variable must also be collected. A 'Social marital

status' of 'Married in a registered marriage' exists when the relationship between two people who usually live in the same household is reported as husband, wife, spouse or partner and their 'Registered marital status' is reported as registered married

A 'Social marital status' of 'Married in a de facto marriage' exists when the relationship between two people who usually live in the same household is reported as partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, fiance, lover, boyfriend or girlfriend, etc.; or when their relationship is reported as husband, wife or spouse and their 'Registered marital status' is reported as a category other than registered married.

Responses of 'Child under 15' and 'Visitor' indicate people who are out of scope of this variable. All other responses are coded as 'Not married'.

To identify a registered marriage, Q1 below is asked to determine if a husband, wife or partner relationship is either a registered marriage or a de facto marriage.

Q1. Are (you) a	and (Partner's name) in a	registered marriage?	
Yes		End	
No		Go to Q2	

If the answer is 'Yes', the detailed 'Social marital status' of each member of the couple is 'Married in a registered marriage' (see Table 1). If the answer is 'No', the detailed 'Social marital status' is 'Married in a de facto marriage' (also see Table 1).

Table 1: 'Social marital status' decision table

Broad 'Social marital status'	Question 1	Detailed 'Social marital status'	
Married	Yes	Married in a registered marriage	
Married	No	Married in a de facto marriage	
Not married	*	Not married	
Not applicable	*	Not applicable	

NOTE: * Data from this question not required to derive detailed 'Social marital status'.

Further details of same-sex couple de facto marriages are identified by cross classifying with the couples' reported sex.

Stage 3 - Deriving 'Registered marital status'

This stage is necessary for the collection of the 'Registered marital status' variable. If the answer to Q1 above is 'Yes', then the 'Registered marital status' of each member of the couple is 'Married'. If the answer is 'No' the following question is asked:

Q2. What is's present martial status?				
	Never married	1	End	
	Widowed	2	End	
	Divorced	3	End	
	Separated but not divorced	4	End	
	Registered married	5	End	
	De facto	6	Go to Q3	
	Single	7	Go to Q3	
	Not married	8	Go to Q3	

'Registered marital status' is coded according to the response category chosen in Q2 above (see Table 2). However, some respondents may give answers that are different from the first five options listed in Q2. The categories 'de facto', 'single' and 'not married' are included on the interview form or the interviewer's computer screen. However, these categories are not included on any prompt card that is shown to the respondent.

If the response 'De facto', 'Single' or 'Not married' is given rather than one of the five standard response categories above, the following question is asked:

Q3. Has ever been in a registered marriage?				
	Yes	Q4		
	No	End		

If the response is 'No', then the person's 'Registered marital status' is 'Never married'. If the response is 'Yes', the following question is asked:

Q4. Is widowed, divorced or separated?				
	Widowed	1	End	
	Divorced	2	End	
	Separated	3	End	

^{&#}x27;Registered marital status' is coded accordingly (see Table 2).

Table 2: 'Registered marital status' decision table

Detailed 'Social marital status'	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	'Registered marital status'
Married in a registered marriage	*	*	*	Married
Married in a de facto marriage; or Not married	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	*	*	Coded to Q2 response
Married in a de facto marriage; or Not married	6, 7, 8	Yes	1, 2, 3	Coded to Q4 response
Married in a de facto marriage; or Not married	6, 7, 8	No	*	Never married
Not applicable	*	*	*	Not applicable

NOTE: * Data from this question not required to derive 'Registered marital status'.

Question 2:

- 1 = Never married
- 2 = Widowed
- 3 = Divorced
- 4 = Separated but not divorced
- 5 = Registered married
- 6 = De facto
- 7 = Single
- 8 = Not married

Question 4:

- 1 = Widowed
- 2 = Divorced
- 3 = Separated

Self-completed collections

The data that form the input to the 'Social marital status' classification are derived from those collected for 'Relationship in household'. The question module is explained in the 'Relationship in household' standard. The methodology is the same as that described above in 'Stage 1 - Deriving broad 'Social marital status'.

The Census of Population and Housing also asks the following question about 'Registered marital status', responses to which are used to refine 'Social marital status' in the manner described above in 'Stage 2 - Deriving detailed 'Social marital status'.

Q. W	Q. What is the person's present marital status?		
(Marrie	ed refers to registered marriages)		
	Never married		
	Widowed		
	Divorced		
	Separated but not divorced		
	Married		

Standard input categories

The standard input categories are the same as the categories of the 'Social marital status' classification with the additional supplementary category, 'Not stated':

Married
Married (not further defined)
Married in a registered marriage
Married in a de facto marriage
Married in a de facto marriage, opposite sex couple
Married in a de facto marriage, same-sex couple
Married in a de facto marriage, male same-sex couple
Married in a de facto marriage, female same-sex couple
Not married
Not married
Not stated
Not stated

Output

Standard output categories

'Social marital status' output may be presented in aggregate form, comprising the two categories 'Married' and 'Not married', or in an expanded form as follows:

Married		
	in a registered marriage	
	in a de facto marriage	
Not married		

Output at a greater level of detail than the expanded form above is not generally recommended as the reporting of same-sex couple relationships is likely to be low. Such data are thus expected to be statistically insignificant and their output in some collections may breach ABS confidentiality provisions.

Therefore output for 'Married in a de facto marriage' should be accompanied by a footnote stating that the category includes partners in same-sex de facto relationships.

Labels and footnotes

In publications and discussions where both the 'Registered marital status' and 'Social marital status' concepts are addressed, clear labels and footnotes must be used to differentiate 'Registered marital status' categories from 'Social marital status' categories.

Footnotes should state that in the 'Social marital status' classification:

- The category 'Married' includes de facto marriages and registered marriages.
- The category 'Married in a de facto marriage' includes same-sex couples.
- The category 'Not married' includes people who are not currently living with their registered marriage spouse or with a de facto partner.

A footnote should state that in the 'Registered marital status' classification:

• The category 'married' excludes de facto marriages.

In addition, definitions for the concepts and categories used should be listed in a glossary of terms. These should be consistent with those outlined in the Glossary. In some instances, there may be a need for explanatory notes to further clarify the concepts.

Not registered married

Care should be taken when using the term 'Not married' in relation to 'Registered marital status' to prevent confusion with the 'Social marital status' category. The term 'Not registered married' should be used in preference to 'Not married', if there is any possibility of ambiguity. It should be noted that the term 'Not registered married' relates to those people whose 'Registered marital status' is coded as 'Never married', 'Widowed' or 'Divorced'.

If the term 'Not married' is used where the data refer to 'Registered marital status', the ABS advises it should be footnoted as follows:

• 'Refers to people whose 'Registered marital status' is 'Never married', 'Widowed' or 'Divorced', including those who are living with a de facto partner.'

Ever married

The term 'Ever married' can be used to refer to all people whose 'Registered marital status' is other than 'Never married'.

Cross classified output structure

Using both 'Registered marital status' and 'Social marital status'

In many circumstances the most useful application of 'Registered marital status' will be in combined output with 'Social marital status'. Where such output is required, the following output structure is standard.

Registered marriage	
	Married
De facto marriage	
	Never registered married
	Widowed
	Divorced
	Separated
	Registered married (1)
Not married	
	Never registered married
	Widowed
	Divorced
	Separated
	Registered married (2)

- 1. This category includes individuals still in a registered marriage who have formed a de facto marriage with another person.
- 2. This category includes individuals who report themselves as being in a registered marriage but whose spouse is not a usual resident of the same dwelling.

Cross-classifying 'Registered marital status' and 'Social marital status'

It is not anticipated that many collections will present data cross-tabulated in this way. However, when this is necessary, the following format is recommended for output tables:

Table structure

		Social marital status	
	Ma	arried	
	Registered	De facto	Not married
Registered marital status			
Never married	n/a (1)		
Widowed	n/a (1)		
Divorced	n/a (1)		
Separated	n/a (1)		
Married		(2)	(3)

- 1. Not applicable as it is not possible to have data for these categories.
- 2. This category includes individuals still in a registered marriage who have formed a de facto marriage with another person.
- 3. This category includes individuals who report themselves as being in a registered marriage but whose spouse is not a usual resident of the same dwelling.

Measurement issues

No specific measurement issues apply to the variable 'Social marital status' beyond the normal constraints affecting statistical collections, such as problems with confidentiality and standard errors which may prevent the output of data for some of the categories of the classification.

Related classifications

Because of the close connection between 'Social marital status', 'Registered marital status', 'Relationship in household', 'Family composition' and 'Household composition', none of these should be changed without first considering any implications of the proposed change for the other related classifications.

Registered marital status

The Registered Marital Status Standard variable identifies current and historical marriage arrangements that comply with the Marriage Act 1961 and have an official record.

The Registered Marital Status Standard reflects the 2017 amendments to the Marriage Act 1961 making same-sex marriage legal in Australia. The Marriage Amendment (Definition and Religious Freedoms) Act 2017 removed references to sex or gender and redefined marriage as 'the union of two people to the exclusion of all others'.

Terminology used in this Standard is defined in the 'Glossary' available in this publication.

Introduction

Introduction to the standard

Registered Marital Status establishes whether people are currently or have ever been in a registered marriage. Social Marital Status is a related concept that establishes people's current living arrangements by relationship status. The two concepts measure different personal characteristics and are treated as independent variables with separate classifications. The standard variables can be used independently or cross-classified, depending on the purpose of the analysis. Registered Marital Status is also used in the derivation of Social Marital Status.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) recommends that Registered Marital Status is output where official marriage arrangements are specifically required for analysis, and that Social Marital Status is output when information on current living arrangements and partnerships is required.

Underlying concepts

Name of variable

The name of the variable is Registered Marital Status.

Definition of variable

Nominal definition

The variable Registered Marital Status is defined as a person's relationship status in terms of whether they currently have, or have had, a legally registered marriage with another person with whom they hold or held a valid marriage certificate.

People who have a relationship or civil union registered under the Relationships Act 2003 (Tasmania), Relationships Act 2008 (Victoria), Civil Partnership Act 2008 (Australian Capital Territory), Relationship Register Act 2010 (New South Wales) or the Civil Partnerships Act 2011 (Queensland) are not partners in a registered marriage under the Marriage Act 1961.

The Marriage Act 1961 states that a person may be married at 18 years; however, people from the age of 16 years may apply to a Judge or Magistrate in a State or Territory for an order authorising a marriage. The Act allows for recognition of official marriages that took place in other countries where people may be able to marry at younger ages.

Registered Marital Status is a characteristic of the counting unit 'person'.

Operational definition

The operational definition of Registered Marital Status is the same as the nominal definition (see above). However, as responses are obtained by a direct question, the result will depend on the respondent's perception of their marital status. For example, some respondents in de facto relationships may report their Registered Marital Status as Married although they are not in a registered marriage. This means that operationally, answers to the the question may not directly reflect the nominal definition.

Scope of the variable

The variable Registered Marital Status applies operationally to all people aged 15 years and over in Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) surveys and the Census of Population and Housing. Although the legal age of marriage in Australia is 18, this age range supports the inclusion of the exceptions to this rule that are noted in the 'Nominal definition' section, above.

Supporting variables

Registered Marital Status has no supporting variables.

Discussion of conceptual issues

It is possible to report marital status in more than one way. For example, someone who is currently living in a de facto relationship and is separated from a previous registered marriage could be described as both de facto and separated. They would be reported as Separated in the Registered Marital Status classification, and In a de facto relationship in the Social Marital Status classification.

No specific measurement issues apply to the Registered Marital Status variable beyond the normal constraints affecting statistical collections, such as problems with confidentiality and standard errors which may prevent the output of data for some of the categories of the classification.

Traditional marriages - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

The ABS recommends that partners in traditional marriages involving Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people should be coded as being married in a registered marriage even though such marriages are not registered under the Marriage Act 1961. This 'functional recognition' is endorsed in the Australian Law Reform Commission Report 31 (https://www.alrc.gov.au/publication/recognition-of-aboriginal-customary-laws-alrc-report-31/13-the-recognition-of-traditional-marriages-general-approach/recognition-of-traditional-marriage/) (1986).

Classification and coding

The classification criteria

The criteria used in classifying Registered Marital Status are:

Table 1: Registered marriage classification criteria

Category	Criteria
Never married	Person has never been in a registered marriage.
\ \ \ (: al a al	Person has been in a registered marriage.
Widowed	Most recent registered marriage partner is no longer living.
Divorced	Person has been in a registered marriage.
Divorced	Person is no longer legally married to their most recent registered marriage partner/has a decree nisi or decree absolute.
Caparatad	Person is currently in a registered marriage.
Separated	Person considers themselves to be no longer in a relationship with most recent registered marriage partner, but has not legally divorced.
Married	Person is currently in a registered marriage.

The standard classification and code structure

Registered Marital Status is a single-level classification with the following five categories and code structure:

- 1. Never married
- 2. Widowed
- 3. Divorced
- 4. Separated
- 5. Married

Residual categories and codes

Not applicable.

Supplementary codes

The following supplementary code is used to code non-responses:

0 Not stated

Scope of the classification

The classification Registered Marital Status applies operationally to all people aged 15 years and over in Australian Bureau of Statistics surveys and the Census of Population and Housing. Although the legal age of marriage in Australia is 18, this age range supports the inclusion of the exceptions to this rule that are noted in the 'Nominal definition' section, above.

Application of the classification to other variables

Registered Marital Status can be cross-tabulated with Social Marital Status. Care should be taken to ensure that labels and footnotes clearly differentiate the two variables. Recommendations for the output structure of this cross tabulation are provided in the 'Output' section of this standard.

Coding procedures

Registered Marital Status is coded to the classification as reported. All categories of the classification are read out or presented as tick-box options, and each of the possible responses is assigned a unique numerical code.

Collection methods

Standard question module

The standard question for collecting Registered Marital Status is shown below.

Q. \	Q. What is [your/(name of person's)/their] current marital status?			
('Mar	rried' refers to registered marriages)			
	Never married			
	Widowed			
	Divorced			
	Separated but not divorced			
	Married			

The different wording options in the brackets depend on mode and who is answering, as follows:

- Paper or online form, answering for self: 'What is your marital status?'
- Paper form, answering for another member of the household: 'What is their marital status?'
- Online form where the person's name can be imported into the field, answering for another member of the household: 'What is [name's] current marital status?'

The term 'legal' is not used in the question wording, however the question encourages respondents to report legally registered marital status with an instruction stating that 'Married refers to registered marriages', and by not including a de facto option in the answer categories.

An additional question 'When did [you/(name of person)/they] get married? [mm/yy]' may be used to screen out de facto relationships if a more precise measure of this concept is required.

Registered Marital Status can also be derived from the suite of Social Marital Status questions.

Standard input categories

The standard input categories are the same as the categories of the Registered Marital Status classification with the addition of the supplementary category, 'Not stated':

Never Married		
Widowed		
Divorced Separated Married Not stated		
Separated		
Married		
Not stated		

Output

Standard output categories

The standard output categories for Registered Marital Status are the same as the standard classification. This is a non-hierarchical structure comprising the five categories:

Never Married	
Widowed	
Widowed Divorced Separated	
Separated	
Married	

Output may also include the supplementary code 0: Not stated, if applicable. (Note - in the Census of Population and Housing, if registered marital status is not stated, it is imputed. For more information, see the glossary term 'Registered Marital Status (MSTP) contained in the Census Dictionary, 2016 (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2901.0Chapter48902016) (cat. no. 1286.0)).

Labels and footnotes

The term 'Not married' can be used for people whose registered marital status is coded as Never married, Widowed or Divorced. People whose registered marital status is coded as Separated are not considered to be 'Not married' as they have not divorced. The term 'Not married' should be footnoted as follows:

• Refers to people whose registered marital status is Never married, Widowed or Divorced, including those who are living with a de facto partner.,

The term 'Ever married' can be used to refer to people whose registered marital status is other than Never married. It should be footnoted as follows:

• Refers to people whose registered marital status is Widowed, Divorced, Separated, or Married.

Cross classified output structure

Registered Marital Status can be cross-classified with Social Marital Status. A standard output structure for this cross-classification can be found in the 'Output' section of the Social Marital Status Standard contained in this publication. Care should be taken to ensure that labels and footnotes clearly differentiate the two variables.

Measurement issues

No specific measurement issues apply to the variable Registered Marital Status beyond the normal constraints affecting statistical collections, such as problems with confidentiality and standard errors which may prevent the output of data for some of the categories of the classification.

Related classifications

Because of the close connection between Registered Marital Status, Social Marital Status, Relationship in Household, Family Composition and Household Composition, none of these should be changed without first considering any implications of the proposed change for the other related classifications.

Income unit composition

The ABS has developed the concept of the 'income unit' as a statistical unit appropriate for certain types of income analysis, particularly when considering households receiving income support payments (through social security) and income tax. The standard variable 'Income unit composition' supports the identification of income units within households.

Terminology used in this standard is defined in the Glossary.

Introduction

Introduction to the standard

A major determinant of economic wellbeing for most people is the level of income they and other family members in the same household receive. While income is usually received by individuals, it is normally shared between partners in a couple relationship and their dependent children. To a lesser extent, it may be shared with other children, other relatives and possibly other people living in the same household, for example through the provision of accommodation either free or at less than market price. This situation is more likely in the case of non-dependent children and other relatives with low levels of income of their own.

Even when there is no transfer of income between members of a household, nor provision of free or discounted accommodation, household members benefit from the economies of scale that arise from sharing a dwelling. Therefore the household is often used for the analysis of the levels and distribution of income.

For some analysis it is appropriate to use a statistical unit in which it can be assumed that a high degree of sharing of income, and other economic resources, takes place. A unit based on the degree of income sharing between couples and their

dependent children may be more useful, in such cases, than one based on the income sharing with other of the household. The income unit serves this purpose.

Underlying concepts

Name of variable

The name of the variable is 'Income unit composition'.

The primary factor determining 'Income unit composition' is the assumption that particular groups of people within a household will pool their income and share the benefits. Any person not belonging to a multi-person income unit represents an income unit in their own right. The basis for identifying the income unit is 'Relationship in household'. For more information, see the 'Relationship in household' standard.

Definition of variable

Nominal definition

The variable 'income unit' is nominally defined as:

- A group of two or more related people in the same household assumed to pool their income and savings and to share the benefits deriving from them equitably; or
- One person assumed to have sole command over their income, consumption and savings.

This definition is the basis of the operational definition of 'Income unit composition'.

The variable 'Income unit composition' is defined as:

- The differentiation of income units on the basis of the number of people in the income unit and the presence of dependent children.
- 'Income unit composition' is an attribute of the statistical unit 'income unit'.

Operational definition

Operationally, 'income unit' is defined as:

- A group of two or more people who are usually resident in the same household and are related to each other through a couple relationship and/or parent/dependent child relationship; or
- A lone person who is not party to either such relationship.

The operationalisation of 'Income unit composition' is:

• The allocation of people in households to categories of the 'Income unit composition' classification on the basis of their relationship to other members of the household.

Scope of the variable

The variable 'Income unit composition' applies to all income units.

Supporting variables

'Income unit composition' requires the supporting variable 'Relationship in household'.

Discussion of conceptual issues

Multi-person income units comprise people within a family, each of whom is related to another by either a couple relationship or a parent/dependent child relationship. Any person not party to such a relationship, including non-dependent children, is treated as a separate income unit.

It is important to recognise these related points:

- Many Australian dwellings accommodate a single household, comprising a single family and a single income unit.
- While a family must comprise two or more people, an income unit (or a household) may comprise only one person.
- Certain variables, e.g. 'Tenure type', apply primarily to the counting unit 'income unit'. These can also apply by extension to the 'larger' units of 'family' and 'household'.

The concept of the income unit rests on two assumptions:

- There are certain family relationships where all income is pooled and shared between all those so related, who benefit equitably from access to their common financial resources.
- People not party to such a relationship have access to their own financial resources over which they exercise exclusive control.

An additional assumption underlies the operationalisation of the concept:

• The relationships about which the ABS makes those assumptions are those between partners in a couple relationship and between parents and their dependent children. In many cases this operational assumption may not be appropriate. For example, if young adults up to the age of 21 who are not full-time students and are unemployed are present (who are unlikely to have significant financial resources of their own), it may be more appropriate to use the household as the unit of analysis.

In ABS statistics, a dependent child is classified as either a child under 15 or a dependent student (i.e. a full-time student aged 15-24 living with his or her parents and with no child(ren) or partner of his or her own) irrespective of his or her financial dependency.

An operational constraint of household surveys is that the income unit, like the family, must comprise usual residents of the same household. There are, however, a number of circumstances that may result in parents and their financially dependent children living apart. Specifically, this occurs where:

- Full-time students live away from home, and
- Non-custodial parents provide for dependent children living in another household.

Classification and coding

The classification criteria

Income units are classified according to the following criteria:

- whether they comprise one person or more than one person
- among those comprising more than one person, whether a couple relationship exists and
- among those where a couple relationship exists, whether any dependent children are present.

Note that one-parent income units always include dependent children. In a one parent family with non-dependent children only, each individual comprises a separate one-person income unit.

The standard classification and code structure

The standard classification of 'Income unit composition' is:

- 1 Couple only
- 2 Couple with dependent children
- 3 One parent with dependent children
- 4 One person

Residual categories and codes

All income units can be coded to one of the substantive categories of the 'Relationship in household' data so residual categories and codes are not required.

Supplementary codes

A supplementary code of '0 Inadequately described' is provided for those cases where 'Relationship in household' data are insufficient to identify and classify the component income units.

Definitions of the categories

The categories of the classification are defined as follows:

- Couple only income unit: an income unit comprising two partners in a couple relationship.
- · Couple with dependent children income unit: an income unit comprising two partners in a couple relationship and all of their

dependent children.

- One parent income unit: an income unit comprising a lone parent and all of their dependent children.
- One person income unit: an income unit comprising a person who is not party to either a couple or parent/dependent child relationship. Specifically this includes all persons identified by the 'Relationship in household' variable as a non-dependent child, an other related individual or a non-family member.

Scope of the classification

The classification applies to all income units.

Coding procedures

'Income unit composition' is coded from data obtained from 'Relationship in household'. The rules and procedures for allocating individuals to income units are the same as those for identifying families which were explained in detail in the 'Family composition' standard, except that persons who are not in couple or one parent income units are not allocated to any form of 'Other family' income unit. Such persons form instead one person income units. The procedures are as follows:

Where a couple relationship is identified, the couple will form the nucleus of an income unit. If 'Relationship in household' data reveal the presence of one or more natural, adopted, step, or foster dependent children of that couple, the couple and the dependent children will be coded as a Couple with dependent children income unit. A couple without dependent children will be coded as a 'Couple only' income unit.

Once any couple relationships have been identified in the household, if there is a lone parent with one or more natural, adopted, step, or foster dependent children, that parent and the children will be coded as a 'One parent' income unit.

Any person in a household aged 15 or over who is not allocated to an income unit using these procedures will be coded as a 'One person' income unit. Specifically, non-dependent children of any age, lone parents without dependent children, other related individuals and non-family members in family households - and all persons in group households and lone person households - comprise 'One person' income units.

Any child under 15, who is not the natural, adopted, step or foster child of anyone in the household, is allocated to an income unit as a 'nominal child'. The ABS uses the concepts of the 'nominal child' and 'nominal parent' where to all intents and purposes a 'parent-child' relationship exists, to facilitate a more accurate and analytically useful picture of the arrangements that may exist in the household. Children under 15 who are not the natural, adopted, step or foster child of anyone in the household are allocated to an income unit in the same way as a 'nominal child' is allocated to a 'nominal parent' in family coding. See the 'Family composition' standard for more details. A nominal parent is allocated to a nominal child by applying the following rules in the order shown below. The role of nominal parent is given to:

- The nominal child's eldest sibling who is over the age of 25.
- The nominal child's closest non-sibling relative aged 25 or more. If necessary, relationships by lineage (vertical) take precedence over other types of relationships, e.g. a grandmother over an aunt, or an aunt over a cousin.
- Persons in a couple relationship.
- A female in preference to a male, e.g. an aunt over an uncle.
- The eldest person usually resident in the dwelling.

Where an unattached child under 15 is allocated to an income unit in accordance with the procedures detailed above, the child is treated in the same way as a natural, adopted, step or foster child. The composition of the nominal parent's income unit is then established in accordance with the procedures set out above. This may result in a 'Couple only' income unit becoming a 'Couple with dependent children' income unit or a 'One person' income unit becoming a 'One parent with dependent children' income unit.

In summary:

- Couple relationships are identified first. Each identified couple, along with their own dependent children, comprises a separate 'Couple only' or 'Couple with dependent children' income unit.
- Any lone parents and their own dependent children form separate 'One parent with dependent children' income units.
- Any other person aged 15 or over forms a separate 'One person' income unit.
- Children under 15 who are not the children of any couple or lone parent in the household are attached to an income unit as a

nominal child as prescribed above.

Collection methods

Standard question module

Income unit composition is coded from 'Relationship in household' information and the recommended methodology and questionnaire modules are explained in the 'Relationship in household' standard. It may be necessary to identify an income unit reference person, using the same criteria described to identify Family and Household reference persons (see Appendix A of the 'Relationship in household' standard).

Standard input categories

The standard input categories are:

Couple only
Couple with dependent children
One parent
One person
Inadequately described

Output

Standard output categories

The standard output categories for 'Income unit composition' are the same as the input categories:

Couple only		
Couple with dependent children		
One parent		
One person		
Inadequately described		

As it is a single level classification, the categories may be grouped and subtotalled to suit different analytical purposes. For example:

Couple				
Couple only				
Couple with depender	t children			
One parent				
One person				

or

Income units with dependent children Couple with dependent children One parent Couple only One person

Mandatory output information

Although all output stated above is standard, every standard output label used must have a Glossary definition.

Related classifications

The 'Income unit composition' classification is related to the following classifications:

- 'Relationship in household'.
- 'Household composition'.
- 'Family composition'.
- 'Social marital status'.

Changes to any of these classifications cannot be considered in isolation and all possible ramifications concerning the other

classifications must be investigated before any changes are adopted.

Glossary

Consensual union

Two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. This concept applies to people in either registered or de facto marriages. In practice, a consensual union exists when the relationship between two people usually resident in the same household is reported as: husband, wife, spouse, partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover, boyfriend or girlfriend.

Couple family with children

A couple family with children usually resident in the same household. It can be expanded upon to elaborate on the characteristics of those children, such as their number, age and dependency status. This family may or may not include other related individuals.

Couple family without children

This is a couple family with no dependent or non-dependent children usually resident in the same household. This family may or may not include other related individuals.

Couple relationship

A couple relationship is defined as two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. This relationship is identified by the presence of a registered or de facto marriage.

Decree absolute

A court of law's final order officially ending a marriage, enabling either party to remarry.

Decree nisi

A decree nisi is a decree granted by a court in the first instance for the dissolution of a registered marriage. It is an interim document issued prior to a decree absolute and refers to the legal condition: "not coming into effect unless a person or persons fail to show cause against it within a certain time".

Though people are not legally divorced until the issuing of a decree absolute, people granted a decree nisi are considered to be divorced for the purposes of the 'Registered marital status' classification.

De facto marriage

Two people who live together in a couple relationship who are not registered as being married to each other.

Dependent child

A person aged under 15, or a dependent student.

Dependent student

A full-time student aged 15-24, living in the same usual residence as his or her natural, step, foster or adoptive parent.

Derive

To obtain a value for a variable based on the responses to other questions or (where no response has been provided) from other family members present in the same dwelling.

Divorced

A person who has formally ended their registered marriage by legal means and who has not remarried. People who have obtained a decree nisi are considered to be divorced. A 'decree nisi' is an interim legal document granted before a 'decree absolute' legally ends the marriage.

Ever married

A person whose 'Registered marital status' is other than 'Never married' 'Widowed', 'Divorced', 'Separated', or 'Married'.

Family

Two or more people, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, and who are usually resident in the same household. The basis of a family is formed by identifying the presence of a couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship or other blood relationship. Some households will therefore contain more than one family.

Family number

A code that identifies the person as a member of a particular family within the household. This is done for all persons in all family households, however it is particularly relevant to people living in multifamily households. Separate families are treated as separate units by the 'Relationship in household' classification, thus a family number is allocated to each person in the household indicating to which family that person belongs.

'Family number' allows for up to nine separate families to be coded from the 'Relationship in household' data. A single digit code (0-9) is assigned to each person to indicate to which family the person belongs. The code '0' is assigned to persons who are not members of families (e.g. lone persons). The code '1' is assigned to all family members in one-family households, or to members of the first family in multifamily households. The code '2' is assigned to members of the second family, and so on.

Family reference person

A family reference person is a household member who forms a family with other members of the household. They are used as the basis for determining the familial relationships that exist between the usual residents of the household.

In a single family household, the household reference person and the family reference person are the same person. The following reference person selection criteria are applied to all usual residents aged 15 years or over, from the top down, until a single appropriate family reference person is identified:

- one of the partners in a registered or de facto marriage, or
- a lone parent, or
- the person with the highest income, or
- the owner, purchaser or primary rent payer of the household accommodation, or
- the eldest person.

In multifamily households, the identification of family reference persons allows each family living in a common household to be treated as a separate entity for the purpose of coding.

Household

One or more persons, at least one of whom is at least 15 years of age, usually resident in the same private dwelling.

Household reference person

A household reference person is a household member whose relationship to all other household members can be described in terms that identify the composition of the household and are meaningful to family formation. The relationship between the household reference person and each other individual can identify relationships between other members of the household and further clarify household and family composition.

The following reference person selection criteria are applied to all usual residents aged 15 years or over, from the top down, until a single appropriate household reference person is identified:

- one of the partners in a registered or de facto marriage, or
- a lone parent, or
- the person with the highest income, or
- the owner, purchaser or primary rent payer of the household accommodation, or
- the eldest person.

In a single family household, the household reference person and the family reference person are the same person. In a multifamily household, there is one household reference person (who is also the family reference person for the primary family)

and a family reference person for each subsequent family.

Income unit

A group of two or more people who are usually resident in the same household and are related to each other through a couple relationship and/or parent/dependent child relationship; or a person not party to either such relationship.

Lone ancestor

An other related, usually resident, individual who is a father/mother or grandfather/grandmother. They are therefore a usually resident parent or grandparent of a person in the household who has already formed a family relationship. To be identified as an other related individual, a person cannot have a spouse or partner usually resident in the household and cannot form a parent-child relationship with any other related individual in the household.

Married

'Married' has a different meaning depending on whether it refers to the concept of 'Social marital status' or 'Registered marital status'. According to the concept of 'Social marital status', the term married in 'Social marital status' refers to the status of a person living with another person in either a registered or de facto relationship. According to the concept of 'Registered marital status', the term 'married' refers to the status of a person in a legally registered marriage, provided they are not separated from their spouse, even if the spouse is not a usual resident of the same household. If there is any possibility of ambiguity, the term 'registered married' is used in preference to 'married' in relation to 'Registered marital status'.

Married in a de facto marriage

A person is married in a de facto marriage when they live with another person in a couple relationship that is not a registered marriage.

Married in a registered marriage

A person who lives with another person in a couple relationship and to whom they are legally registered as married.

In practice, a person is classified as being a partner in a registered marriage if their relationship to another person, who usually lives in the same household, is reported as: husband, wife or spouse, and the 'Registered marital status' of both partners (if also asked in the collection) is reported as registered married.

Never married

A person who has never been a partner in a registered marriage.

Non-private dwelling

Non-private dwellings are establishments which provide a communal type of accommodation. Examples are hotels, motels, Boarding houses, private hotels; public hospitals (not psychiatric); and Child care institutions. Accommodation for the retired or aged (not self-contained) where meals are provided are also considered to be non-private dwellings.

Not married

The term 'not married' is used primarily in relation to 'Social marital status' and refers to a person who is not living with another person in either a registered or de facto marriage. This includes people who live alone, with other family members, and those in shared accommodation. It also includes persons who are in a registered marriage or in a de facto marriage, but whose partners are not usually resident in the household.

When the term 'not married' is used in the context of 'Registered marital status', it refers to people whose 'Registered marital status' is never married, widowed or divorced. It also includes those who are living with a de facto partner and must be footnoted as such.

In the context of 'Registered marital status', the term 'not registered married' is generally used in preference to 'not married'.

Not registered married

A person who is currently not a partner in a registered marriage.

It should be noted that this term relates to people whose 'Registered marital status' is reported as never married, widowed or divorced and that the use of this term is preferable, in the context of 'Registered marital status', to the term 'not married'.

One parent family

A family consisting of a lone parent with at least one dependent or non-dependent child (regardless of age) who is also usually resident in the family. This family type may or may not include other related individuals.

The one parent family concept can be expanded to elaborate on the characteristics of the children, such as whether they are dependent children or not and, for dependent children, whether they are aged under 15 or are dependent students.

Examples of one parent families include a 25-year-old parent with dependent children and an 80-year-old parent living with a 50-year-old child.

Other family

A family of related individuals residing in the same household. These individuals do not form a couple or parent-child relationship with any other person in the household and are not related to a couple or one parent family in the household.

For example, if two brothers live together and neither is a partner, a lone parent or a child to someone else in the household, and neither is related to any person in the household who is in a couple or one-parent family, then they are classified as an 'Other family'. However, if the two brothers share the household with the daughter of one of the brothers and her husband, then both brothers are attached to the couple family and classified as 'Other related individuals'.

Partner

A person in a couple relationship with another person usually resident in the same household. The couple relationship may be in either a registered marriage or de facto partnership.

Primary family

A household can contain one or more families. In a multifamily household, one family is called the 'Primary family'. Where there is more than one family in a household, the family with dependent children is designated the 'Primary family'. If there is more than one family with dependent children, or no children are present in the household, then the 'Primary family' is the family of the household reference person.

Private dwelling

A private dwelling is usually a house, flat, or even a room. It can also be a caravan, houseboat, tent, or a house attached to an office, or rooms above a shop. Occupied dwellings in caravan/residential parks are treated as occupied private dwellings.

Registered marital status

An individual's current status in regard to a registered marriage, i.e. whether they are widowed, divorced, separated, married or never married.

Registered married

A legally registered married person not separated from their spouse, even if the spouse is not a usual resident of the same household.

Relationship in household

The relationship of each person in a family to the family reference person or, where a person is not part of a family, that person's relationship to the household reference person.

Same-sex couple

Two people of the same sex who form a couple relationship and are usually resident in the same household.

Second and third families

Second and third families are those families in a household other than the 'Primary family'.

Separated

A person who is a partner in a registered marriage, but considers themselves to be no longer in a relationship and has not yet divorced.

Social marital status

The relationship status of an individual to another person who is a usual resident in the household. Under 'Social Marital Status' a marriage exists when two people live together as husband and wife, or partners, regardless of whether the marriage is formalised through registration. Individuals are, therefore, regarded as married if they are in a de facto marriage, or they are registered as legally married.

Widowed

A person whose spouse in a registered marriage has died and who has not remarried.

History of changes

13/09/2022

The Relationship in Household and Social Marital Status Standards contained in this publication were reviewed and updated in September 2022. These updated versions reflect amendments to the Marriage Act 1961 and align them with changes made to the Registered Marital Status Standard in August 2019. A review of the full set of Family, Household and Income Unit Standards is being undertaken.

28/08/2019

The Registered Marital Status Standard contained in this publication was reviewed and updated in August 2019. The updated version reflects recent amendments to the Marriage Act 1961. Relevant glossary entries were also updated to reflect changes.

12/02/2016

Minor change to text in 'Family Composition - Classification and Coding' and 'Household Composition - Output' pages to remove repetition of language and align with the 2011 and 2016 Census Dictionary.